











CHARACTERS AND CRITICISMS.

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~~W. P. Nimmo~~  
CHARACTERS AND CRITICISMS:

A Book of Miscellanies.

BY

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"Satire and Satirists," etc.

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WITH ESTEEM AND AFFECTION,

TO

CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L.,

BISHOP OF ST ANDREWS.



# C O N T E N T S.

	PAGE
PLUTARCH, . . . . .	1
✓ THACKERAY, . . . . .	42
A LETTER TO AN ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMER, . . . . .	60
PROFESSOR RAMSAY, . . . . .	70
✓ CAXTONIANA, . . . . .	75
THE SCOTTISH NEW YEAR'S DAY, . . . . .	84
LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU, . . . . .	88
A RADICAL ROMANCE, . . . . .	102
ON SERMONS, . . . . .	106
LORD EGLINTON, . . . . .	111
MR EDGAR'S HISTORIES FOR YOUTH, . . . . .	116
THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF DEMOCRACY, . . . . .	126
THE DELEGATE—AN ECLOGUE, . . . . .	131
CAPTAIN SPEKE, . . . . .	133
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH POETRY, . . . . .	137
HOLLAND, . . . . .	148
DUTCH PRESBYTERIANISM, . . . . .	153
EDUCATION IN HOLLAND, . . . . .	158
THE DUTCH CLERGY, . . . . .	163
GENERAL FEATURES OF DUTCH LIFE, . . . . .	168
✓ JOHN GEORGE EDGAR, . . . . .	172

	PAGE
FREE CHURCH PRETENSIONS, . . . . .	177
CHANGES OF NAME AND SURNAME, . . . . .	182
TOM DUNCOMBE, . . . . .	187
THALATTA, . . . . .	193
SCOTTISH CLERICAL EDUCATION, . . . . .	200
THE SCOT ABROAD, . . . . .	205
EPIGRAMS, . . . . .	213
LORD AMBERLEY, . . . . .	214
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF LEIGH HUNT, . . . . .	219
SPECIMENS OF A NEW DIBDIN, . . . . .	229
DR GUTHRIE AS MODERATOR, . . . . .	232
MR BUCKLE ON CIVILISATION IN SCOTLAND, . . . . .	238
LORD BURY, . . . . .	272
THE SCOTTISH SUNDAY QUESTION, . . . . .	277
THE SNOB ABROAD, . . . . .	283
HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE, . . . . .	287
SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY, . . . . .	292
DR GUTHRIE, . . . . .	306
PROFESSOR WILSON, . . . . .	310



# CHARACTERS AND CRITICISMS.

## PLUTARCH.

(*Quarterly Review*, October 1861. \*)

THE appearance of a new version—as in some sort this is—of the “Lives” of Plutarch, is not only a literary event, but one of no little historical importance. For Plutarch is not merely the first of biographers by right of having produced a great number of biographies of the first class, but he holds a position unique, peculiar, and entirely his own, in modern Europe. We have all “naturalised” the old gentleman, and admitted him to the rights of citizenship, from the Baltic to the Pillars of Hercules. He was a Greek, to be sure, and a Greek no doubt he is still. But as when we think of a Devereux or a Stanley we call him an Englishman, and not a Norman, so who

\* *Plutarch's Lives. The Translation called Dryden's, corrected from the Greek and revised by A. W. Clough, sometime Fellow and Tutor of Oriel College, Oxford, and late Professor of the English Language and Literature at University College, London. In 5 volumes. 1859.*

among the reading public troubles himself to reflect that Plutarch wrote Attic prose of such or such a quality? Scholars know all about it to be sure, as they know that the turkeys of our farm-yards came originally from Mexico. Plutarch, however, is not a scholar's author, but is popular everywhere, as if he were a native. It is as though the drachmas which he carried in his purse on his travels were still current coin in the public markets and exchanges.

Now this, we repeat, is a unique phenomenon. There is no other case of an ancient writer, whether Greek or Latin, becoming as well known in translations as he was in the classical world, or as great modern writers are in the modern one. Neither is there another case of the world's accepting, as it does with "Plutarch's Lives," *all* translations with more or less thankfulness. Nor, again, will another instance be found of an ancient writer's forming so curious a link between his world of thought and those who care for nothing else but what he tells them about or in that world. It is, indeed, wonderful how little translators have yet achieved for the classical men; and this fact might well deserve serious consideration in our age. Pope's "Homer" is, perhaps, our most popular translation. But is there any other version of an ancient much read? Some are read, no doubt, as aids to the study of the originals; and some, like our "Horaces," for the pleasure of seeing how far a delicate and difficult task has been overcome. We have plenty of "cribs," and we have a few works of art, of which last the "Aristophanes" of Mr Frere is (as far as it goes) an unrivalled specimen. Where, however, is the mere stranger to look for translations which shall justify to him the tantalising and pro-

voking praise he hears on all hands of the antique men ? They are not to be found.

We are told by the literary historians that Plutarch was translated into modern Greek in the fourteenth century ; and a pious archbishop of Heleno-Pontus had, three centuries earlier, expressed a hope of his eternal salvation conjointly with Plato.\* But we do not find him quoted by our own chroniclers, as the Latin poets and Cicero sometimes are. His real glory begins with the revival of letters, when *Latin* versions of his "Lives" appeared, and were followed by Greek editions (though not till early in the sixteenth century) both of the "Lives" and the "Morals." Plutarch, however, was destined to be famous through translations chiefly. The folios of Venice and Florence would get abroad, no doubt, and obtain their share of notice from the scholars who were now labouring like miners in the long-buried cities of antiquity. But the important day for Plutarch and the modern world was that on which the eyes of Jacques Amyot, a French churchman, first fell upon his text. Amyot was born at Melun, of humble parents, in 1513 (just four years before the appearance of the *editio princeps* of the "Lives," in Greek, at Florence), and studied at Melun, Paris, and Bourges. He held a chair in the last-named town, thanks to the kindness of Margaret, sister of Francis I. ; and some early versions which he made from the "Lives" induced that "humane great monarch" to present him to the Abbaye of Bellozane. He went to Venice, attached to an ambassador, where he had no doubt access to important MSS. of his favourite author. He was for some time at the Council

\* Fabricius, *Bibl. Græc.*, ed. Harles, v. 156.

of Trent. He received something from each of several successive kings of France, and died a bishop, rich and renowned, in 1583. Such is a brief summary of the career of a man to whom Plutarch owes his modern fame, and to whom the modern world owes Plutarch. But Amyot's literary merits do not even stop here. He was one of the earliest writers of attractive French prose. He had an immense influence on Montaigne ; and, what is still more important, our own countryman, Sir Thomas North, translated from Amyot's translation, and supplied Shakespeare with the groundwork of his "Coriolanus," "Julius Cæsar," and "Antony and Cleopatra." Very few men of letters have done so much for the world as Jacques Amyot, Bishop of Auxerre.

Amyot finished the "Lives" before the "Morals," and published them in 1559. It was the year that Mary Stuart's first boy-husband died ; and Montaigne was a young gentleman of twenty-six. By-and-by the "Morals" appeared, and made Montaigne an essayist ; so at least he tells us himself, for Plutarch and Seneca, he says, formed him, and he preferred Plutarch of the two. "I draw from them," are his words, "like the Danaides, filling and emptying, *sans cesse*." He read no books so much as Plutarch's "Lives" and "Morals," and especially admired the "Comparisons" in the "Lives," "the fidelity and sincerity of which equal their profundity and weight." And he further expressly tells us that he read them in Amyot, "to whom I give the palm over all our French writers, not only for the *naïveté* and purity of his language, but for having had the wisdom to select so worthy a book." Montaigne had, indeed, some personal acquaintance with

Amyot ; and it is a fact that he quotes Plutarch no less than two hundred times. As every essayist traces his pedigree to Montaigne, what a noble, flourishing tree must that be esteemed which rooted itself and spread its healthy green leaves in Chæroneia in the first century !

Amyot's folios were popular, strange as *popular folio* sounds to us. The fact is, that this was the first time that the gentlemen of feudal Europe made the personal acquaintance of the gentlemen of classical Europe. Of course there had always been a vague traditionary knowledge of the Roman and Greek heroes. Niebuhr remarks that stories about them used to be read out of Valerius Maximus to the German knights as they sat at dinner ; and the mediæval chroniclers frequently garnish their descriptions with allusions to their mighty names. But all was dark and shadowy about them, and they wore always a *quasi*-feudal garb, just as the Virgin Mary was spoken of as "*a Princess of coat-armour*" by our countrywoman Dame Juliana Berners. In Shakspeare's "*Troilus and Cressida*," with its "*Lord Æneas*," we see the influence of the mediæval view of the ancients ; but when he writes from Plutarch, they become different men. It was Amyot that worked this change, by showing them in their real characters as described by an ancient in a civilised age.

We must not be surprised then to hear that Amyot's "*Plutarch*" was the favourite reading of Henri Quatre, nor that De Retz found only among the "*men of Plutarch*" parallels to the heroic Montrose. *Homme de Plutarque* became indeed a typical description in France, as we name plants after their discoverers and classifiers. Amyot might be superseded by Dacier, but Plutarch was still read by



the generation of Rousseau, who himself sat up till sunrise over the old Bœotian's page. Later still, whatever varnish of classicality adorned the heads of the "revolutionary heroes" seems to have come from the same inexhaustible source. We know that this has been urged against the Plutarchian influence. But the answer is, that without it the "heroes" would have been still more brutal and vulgar than some of them were. The "Gracchus" and "Hampden" of our own Sunday papers are very unlike the children of Cornelia or the landholder of Bucks; they bear the names with much the same appropriateness that negroes do those of Cæsar and Pompey. It would, however, be too extravagant, we venture to think, to decline studying on that account the historians of the Roman Republic or the English Civil War.

Amyot's folios, we say, were popular; and in time it occurred to an Elizabethan knight, Sir Thomas North, to translate them. Sir Thomas was a collateral ancestor of the Guildford family, being a younger son of Edward, the first Lord North, and studied at Lincoln's Inn in the reign of Philip and Mary. But this is nearly all we know of his personal history. In a late edition of his "Plutarch's Lives," dedicating afresh to Queen Elizabeth, he speaks of "the princely bounties of your blessed hand . . . comforting and supporting my poor old decaying life"—which looks as if he had not prospered in the world. He made no secret of the source of his translation of the "Lives," which he first published in 1579, for his title-page runs thus:—"The Lives of the noble Grecians and Romans, compared together by that grave, learned philosopher and historiographer, Plutarch of Chæroneæ; translated out of

Greeke into French by James Amiot, Abbot of Bellozane, Bishop of Auxerre; . . . . and out of French into English by Sir Thomas North, Knight." This was honest in Sir Thomas, and is also a sign how highly esteemed Amyot's work had become within twenty years from its publication. He laid the book at the feet of Queen Elizabeth in an epistle breathing all the high-flown and stately loyalty of the day. Some expressions of his testify that he knew the value of biography, that he looked on it as an art preserving the record of great men's lives, in order that such record may help to produce other great men.

North's "Plutarch" was successful in England, as Amyot's had been in France; and this though (as Mr Payne Collier remarks) each copy sold for more than five pounds of our money. The first edition, we have said, appeared in 1579; and editions are known of 1595, 1612, and 1631. Who can estimate the influence of such a book on the education of the leading men of the kingdom in those gallant old ages? or guess how often the growing young cavaliers of the country turned over its venerable pages in the big bay-windows of English country-houses during the warm summer afternoons? The heroes were pagans to be sure, not equal in type to Christian chivalry, "tender and true," of the northern lands. But in valour, in patriotism, in noble manliness of intellect, in a deep sense of the value of friendship, "Plutarch's men" were not unworthy the cordial study of the descendants of the Crusaders; and besides, such study widened the views of our ancestors, and enlarged their knowledge of politics and society. Other classical authors taught the principles of antiquity; Plutarch

showed the persons. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that he has done more than any one writer to create that sort of personal *affection* for the best men of the antique world which has always been so common among people of good culture.

Though we cannot expect to enjoy North's "Plutarch" as it was enjoyed in his own time, we cannot open it without perfectly understanding why it was esteemed and liked; and there are men even now who use it in preference to modern translations. Of course, its style is stiff and what we commonly call quaint, with an odd familiar homeliness running through, now its stateliness, and now its pathos. But there is great directness of picturesque force sometimes; and we find not a few touches of that *naïveté* which our French neighbours have so long agreed to assign to Amyot. We might quote the death of Demosthenes, the interview between Augustus and Cleopatra, the last hours of Cicero, as good specimens of North's manner. But a briefer passage shall introduce the worthy old Knight to a generation which has forgotten him. It is from the "Pericles," and describes how the cultivated fortitude of the refined Athenian statesman at last broke down as he stood beside the corpse of his beloved son:—

"Moreover he lost at that time by the plague the more part of his friends and kinsfolkes, and those specially that did him the greatest pleasure in governing of the State. But all this did never put down his countenance, nor anything abate the greatnesse of his mind, what misfortune soever he had sustained. Neither saw they him weep at any time, nor mourne at the funerals of any of his kinsmen or friends, but at the death of *Paralus*, his youngest and lawfull begotten sonne: for the loss



of him alone did onely melt his heart. But as he would have put a garland of flowers upon his head, sorrow did so pierce his heart when he saw his face, that then he burst out in teares and cried amaine : which they never saw him do before all the days of his life."

There is something very affecting in the forcible simplicity of the last sentence. Sometimes this same simplicity has a comic effect ; as when Amyot telling that Cicero was "fort maigre," North renders it "dog-lean ;" or when he narrates that Clodius "had a *sight* of rascals and knaves with him." His use, too, of modern equivalents for the ancient distinctions of rank has a strange look. Plutarch mentions that Cicero's mother was of good birth, τὴν μὲν μητέρα . . . γεγονέναι καλῶς, on which Amyot describes her as of noble family, and North as "*a Gentelwoman born.*" Historians of the language might pick a good deal illustrative of its progress out of this translation.

But we must come to what gives, after all, the greatest hold on posterity to Sir Thomas North, the relation between him and Shakspeare. There is now no doubt of the fact, which Farmer and Warton in the last century helped to make certain and known, which Mr Knight in our own times judiciously turned to account in his edition, that to North's "Plutarch" we owe Shakspeare's Roman plays. Just as we have taken ships from the French, and used them as models in our dockyards, so we took "Plutarch's Lives" from them, and used them to enrich our Drama ! It is one of the most curious chapters in our literary history.

The dates of these Plays, as everybody knows, are uncertain, though there seems no doubt that they belong

to the later period of the great poet's life. But that Shakspeare employed the "Plutarch" of North, the reader shall here see for himself. We transcribe for his perusal a certain portion of North's "Antony," which we have also compared with the corresponding portion of Amyot, whom he closely follows. Let the reader then imagine Shakspeare reading the following passages in his folio North (perhaps, as Mr Collier suggests, the edition of 1595)—if his veneration will allow him to look over the shoulders of such a man :—

"Therefore when she [Cleopatra] was sent unto by diverse letters both from *Antonius* himself and also from his friends, she made so light of it, and mocked *Antonius* so much, that she disdained to set forward otherwise but to take her barge in the river of Cydnus, the poepe whereof was of gold, the sailes of purple, and the oars of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of the music of flutes, hordboyes, cithernes, vials, and such other instruments as they played upon in the barge. And now for the person of her selfe—she was laid under a pavilion of cloth of gold of tissue, apparelled and attired like the goddesse *Venus* commonly drawne in pictures; and hard by her on either hand of her, pretie, fair boyes apparelled as Painters do set foorth god *Cupid*, with little fans in their hands, with which they they fanned wind upon her. Her Ladies and Gentlewomen, also the fairest of them, were apparelled like the Nymphes *Nereides* (which are the Myrmaides of the waters), and like the *Graces*; some stearing the helme, others tending the tackle and ropes of the barge, out of which there came a wonderful passing sweete savour of perfumes that perfumed the wharfe's side, pestered with innumerable multitudes of people. Some of them followed the barge all along the river side, others also ran out of the citie to see her coming in. So that, in the end, there ranne such multitudes of people one

after another to see her, that *Antonius* was left quite alone in the market-place, in his Imperial seat, to give audience; and there went a rumour in the people's mouthe that the goddess *Venus* was come to play with the god *Bacchus* for the general good of all Asia."

This description, which, by the way, is a good deal expanded from the conciseness of the Greek, is surely a very striking one, and could not but make an impression on Shakspeare's imagination. Now turn to "*Antony and Cleopatra*," Act ii, Scene 2, and see how he glorifies it with poetry and music, and yet how substantially he adheres to his author:—

" ENOBARBUS.

"The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
 Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
 Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
 The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver;  
 Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
 The water, which they beat, to follow faster,  
 As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
 It beggar'd all description: she did lie  
 In her pavilion (cloth of gold of tissue),  
 O'er-picturing that *Venus*, where we see  
 The fancy outwork nature: on each side her  
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
 With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem  
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
 And what they undid, did.                   \*                   \*  
                  \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*

Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
 So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,  
 And made their bends adornings: at the helm

A seeming mermaid steers ; the silken tackle  
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,  
That yarely frame the office. From the barge  
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense  
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast  
Her people out upon her ; and Antony,  
Enthroned in the market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to the air."

A curious little detail of proof, were such needed, that North suggested to Shakspeare this delicious painting, is supplied by the poet's mention of "mermaids." Of these Gothic personages the Greek of course knew and said nothing ; the modern translators added them to show what the Nereides were. Dryden in his "All for Love" made an unlucky attempt to improve on this same ancient picture ; and Mr Tennyson's Cleopatra in the "Dream of Fair Women" is still the Cleopatra of Plutarch. Three of our greatest poets, imitating while depicting her, have thrown that pearl into their poetic wine.

In "Antony and Cleopatra" Shakspeare has followed Plutarch more exactly (Mr Hallam thought too exactly) than in the other Roman plays. But whole speeches in "Coriolanus" are directly rendered from North's prose. What, however, is more important is, that the characters are Plutarch's men, how handled we need not say, but still taken from the old biographer, whose biographical instinct (as we shall presently see) was poetic genius in its way. Hence that air of classicism, of genuine antiquity, breathing through these plays, and distinguishing them indefinitely, though really, from "Troilus and Cressida." *There* the material was chivalrous fiction ; and Nestor and *Lord*

Æneas defy each other to prove their mistresses worthy the "splinter of a lance."

We may safely assume that North's was the "Plutarch" of such men as Falkland, Clarendon, and Sydney, whether they could read him with pleasure in the original or not; and that it did no little to form the peculiar classical party which was one element in the Long Parliament. But as the literary school of the Restoration formed itself, and as our prose grew modern, familiar, and more colloquial, North's "Plutarch" went out of fashion. We find editions mentioned in 1657 and 1676; but, a few years afterwards, old Jacob Tonson, the bookseller, thinking that the time had come for a new translation, began his arrangements for one, and announced its approach under the presidency of the great name of Dryden. He had obtained, he said, the assistance of "persons equal to the enterprise, and not only critics in the tongues, but men of known fame and abilities *for style and ornament*." This, we suspect, was a side-blow at the memory of the worthy Sir Thomas North, Knight, as a "dry, old-fashioned wit," a sentence passed upon CHAUCER in that period by the ingenious Mr Cowley! The literary fashion then was to sneer at the elder writers of the country much as Horace did at Plautus; and the age, pluming itself on many things, especially plumed itself on being "polite." "Polite Letters," that was the phrase of our ancestors about this time for what we call light literature.

The great Dryden having hoisted his banner, men were not wanting to serve under it. "His reputation," says Johnson, "was such, that his name was thought necessary to every poetical or literary performance." There worked



under the protection of it now several writers whom the world still remembers, including a few whom it still honours. Somers undertook the "Life of Alcibiades," and Evelyn of "Alexander;" "Otho" was translated by Garth; "Solon" and "Pelopidas" by Creech; Charles Boyle, afterwards the unlucky antagonist of Bentley, did "Lysander." The list further comprises the names of Rycant and Rymer, Dr Stephen Waller (the poet's fourth son and executor), and Dr Smalridge. But of the others, though Duke has a page or two in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," all memory has, generally speaking, vanished. One name, indeed, has provoked some speculation in the journals of the day since Mr Clough's new edition appeared. Mr Clough, in his Appendix to volume fifth, ascribes the "Life of Cicero" to "Thomas Fuller, D.D." Can this have been, a contemporary has asked, the celebrated wit and scholar? There need be no mystery on the subject, for the real name of the translator was "*Samuel* Fuller, D.D.," as a reference to the original edition will show. He was evidently the Dr Samuel Fuller of whom there is still extant "A Sermon preached before the King, June 25th, 1682," and the error is one of those not easy to avoid in producing five considerable octavos.

The first volume of Dryden's "Plutarch" appeared in 1683, and the work was completed in 1686. But what Dryden did towards the heavy part of the labour, was little more than a potentate does now-a-days when he turns up the first sod of a new railway. He left to the young Templars and wits about town, the university-men and physicians of literary taste, who made up his *corps*, the task of translation, and himself achieved only the Epistle-

Dedicatory to the Duke of Ormond and the Life of the old biographer. Indeed, while preparing these for the first volume, he was immersed in controversy, political and personal, deep in the muddy sea of agitation of Charles II.'s latter years ; and, no doubt, only regarded his "Plutarch" as task-work to be executed for so much money.

But, whatever Dryden did, he did with some at least of the characteristics of real power. On the copper coinage, as on the gold coinage of his brain, there is still the head of a king. The Dedication and Life are truly Drydenian ; hasty, but full of easy, rapid, and careless vigour. In the first, he besprinkles the great Tory chief of the Butlers from a perfect fountain of delicious flattery. In the second, he shows a real insight into Plutarch's character, which in its kindliness and humanity was akin to his own. "There is an air of goodness about him," says Dryden ; and makes many acute remarks on biography, which were not so easy to make then as now.

The translation itself has a certain piebald look, the result of its being done by so many "hands" (to use the established term) ; is less poetical than North's, and is studded with the colloquialisms, and sometimes even slang expressions, of Charles II.'s time. Probably, too, the Langhorns were right, when it came to their turn, in doubting whether all the translators translated from the original, and in impugning the accuracy of many parts of their work. We shall have to praise our new editor, Mr Clough, a little further on, for the careful winnowing, the thorough washing, if we may so speak, which he has bestowed upon it. But still the book is modern English,

and has a certain ease and flow, which it would be absurd to seek in that of the Elizabethan knight, whose fashion of writing has for ever passed away. One might prefer the older version, but it would not the less be impossible to adopt it, even as the basis of a version for general use in our time. The Drydenian "Plutarch," meanwhile, with less picturesqueness and pathos than North's, is free from the conventional, artificial tone of the Langhorne "Plutarch." With all its faults, coarseness included, it has the manly freedom and some of the careless graces of that loose-talking, wine-bibbing generation.

Dryden's "Plutarch" now took its turn of popularity, and became the standing English "Plutarch" for nearly a century. There was a second edition in 1716, from old Jacob's shop, the "Shakspeare's Head ;" and another (touched up with the help of Dacier's new French version, according to the Langhorne's) in 1727, which was again supplanted by a third, in 1758. These facts surely indicate a great interest in this writer, whose influence must thus have sunk very generally into the English mind. But in truth, our countrymen appear to have never tired of him, for the same prosperity attended the labours of the brothers Langhorne, whose "Plutarch," published in 1770, ran through edition after edition ; latterly, under the editorial care of the accomplished Archdeacon Wrangham. Langhorne's "Plutarch" we may safely pronounce to have been an article of furniture in every decent British household, these three generations back. The brothers, John and William Langhorne, have long been forgotten in any other association, though John passed for a poet in his day, when that title was more readily conceded than it is now.



A sentiment of gratitude, mixing itself up with boyish recollections, will prevent most of us from doing any injustice to the Langhorne, whose book has no doubt often been the first classical book read from real spontaneous curiosity and interest. Mr Clough, we think, goes too far in summarily characterising it as "dull and heavy." But it was quite time, nevertheless, that it should be superseded by something better. Besides requiring much correction in particular passages, it is certainly not written in a good style, and we assent to the new editor when he pronounces it "inferior in liveliness" to its predecessor. What an irreverent critic has called a "priggish" look marks it; an air of the lecture-room, less suited to the genial nature of Plutarch himself, than the rival air of the coffee-house. To show how the picturesque element is apt to disappear under such treatment, let us once more turn to the memorable Cleopatra chapter in the "Antony." This is what the Langhorne made of the scene on the Cydnus:—

"Though she had received many pressing letters of invitation from Antony and his friends, she held him in such contempt, that she by no means took the most expeditious method of travelling. She sailed down the river Cydnus in a most magnificent galley. The stern was covered with gold, the sails were of purple, and the oars were silver. These in their motions kept time to the music of flutes, pipes, and harps. The queen, in the dress and character of Venus, lay under a canopy embroidered with gold of the most exquisite workmanship; while boys, like painted Cupids, stood fanning her on each side of the sofa. Her maids were of the most distinguished beauty, and, habited like Nereids and Graces, assisted in the steerage and management of this vessel. The fragrance of burning incense was diffused along the shores, which were covered with multi-

tudes of people. Some followed the procession, and such numbers went down from the city to see it, that Antony was at last left alone on the tribunal. A rumour was soon spread, that Venus was come to feast with Bacchus for the benefit of Asia."

What a contrast, this description, with its roundabout amplifications and "genteel" conventional phraseology, to that of the quaint, forcible, pictorial Sir Thomas North! All the oriental splendour is tamed and toned down into the effeminate glitter of a modern drawing-room in a novel. It really reads like an account of the expedition from the reporter of a fashionable newspaper.

In spite, then, of the undoubted merits of the Langhorne version, a livelier and more accurate one has long been a *desideratum*.\* But how was the want to be supplied? Mr Clough, we may suppose, felt that the labour of a translation entirely new was uncalled for, so long as any existing one supplied the materials of a better and more graceful edifice. So he sought and found these in the Drydenian version, of which our opinion has been already given. But any reader who chooses to compare the original form of that version with that which it bears in the work before us, will see that Mr Clough's has been no trifling labour. He has rebuilt it, so to speak, and with a constant eye to the edifice of the Greek architect of which

\* Mr George Long published in 1848 a new translation of thirteen of the *Roman Lives* of Plutarch, selected for their bearing on the later history of the Republic. A detailed notice of these does not fall within our plan; but we gladly testify to the point and spirit which mark them, in common with all the writings of this scholar. Some of the notes are especially curious and suggestive; see particularly those on the *Brutus*.

it is a copy, cleaning here, restoring there, and touching up everywhere. He has improved the "Alcibiades" of Somers, though the style of Somers was praised in its day by Addison. He has chastened down the exuberant *joyeuseté* (to borrow a favourite word from the patriarch Amyot) of the Restoration without sacrificing flow or ease. He has, throughout, employed the best recent texts, to secure the exactness of meaning dear to scholarship. And he does not the less deserve to have such labours recognised, because they are labours of a kind which would appear exceedingly distasteful to many men (if many such there were) who had given proofs so decided, as Mr Clough has, of the possession of original literary genius.

Let us now, however, turn our attention to Plutarch himself. What is known of his personal history is known from incidental notices of himself and his affairs, scattered up and down the voluminous and miscellaneous writings which constitute what are called his Moral Works. These notices have been picked out, like grains of gold, from the mass by many scholars—from Rualdus to Donaldson. He was of a good old family in Chæronea; a family not only respectable in local rank, but marked by a turn for letters and philosophy. The year when he first drew breath in the moist Bœotian air is uncertain. But it must have been from A.D. 40 to A.D. 50, for he was a student of philosophy in A.D. 66, when Nero was in Greece, and he talks in the "Antony" of that emperor's having lived in his time. He visited Egypt, he visited Italy, residing for some time and lecturing at Rome. He settled finally at his birthplace, where he spent his old age in literature, philosophy, and the discharge of local duties as archon

and priest of Apollo. He lived as long as to A.D. 106, the eighth year of the reign of Trajan, but how much longer is uncertain. He was married happily to a wife of the name of Timoxena, and had several sons who attained manhood and left descendants. On the whole, then, we know more about Plutarch's personal history and circumstances than we do about those of his most famous contemporaries in literature, such as Martial, Juvenal, Quintilian, and Suetonius. Excepting the younger Pliny, indeed, there is no man of letters who flourished during Plutarch's long life, so familiarly known to us, the great Tacitus himself the sovereign of them all in genius included.

For the truth is, that though the mere facts which we learn about our biographer are few, they are suggestive facts; while the setting in which we find them, the way in which they are told us, give us really important information about his character and disposition. There was a dash of our modern Pepyses and Boswells about Plutarch, a good-natured egotism and turn for gossip and anecdote. He likes to bring in a story told him by his grandfather Lamprias, or a piece of advice given him by his father, or an adventure of his own; a tendency which helped him no doubt to the friendship of Montaigne. He left on record a letter of consolation to his wife on the death of their daughter, little Timoxena, and a very charming and tender letter it is. He tells the world not only that he lived at Chæronea, but why, because he did not wish his own small birthplace to become smaller, "even by one inhabitant." So too as to the fact of his discharging the office of local magistrate. He dares say people laugh when they see him busy about its details; but these must not be

sneered at, says he, if useful to the commonwealth. He had, in fact, all the local, hereditary, family, and personal instincts very strong. He clearly also had a sweet and cheerful temper, eminently social and domestic. He must have been a notable talker; and probably did not object to a sober cup of wine. Accordingly he much loved the dialogue as a literary form; and he was so inveterate a collector of table-talk, apophthegms, and ana, that many of the stories and sayings of heroes which he gives in the "Lives" had previously done service, and are met with in his other works. It is impossible not to picture him to oneself crowned with a festal garland, and telling these to his friends, say on Plato's birthday for instance, which he always kept as a day at once sacred and joyful. He was abundantly learned in philosophy, of course; but above all, he was rich in the philosophic temper; and had that quick and wide sympathy with all things human which is the right basis of character for a true biographer. Without that, he would never have succeeded equally well in drawing Antony and Coriolanus, the brilliant Athenian Alcibiades, and the shrewd Roman of the old school, the first Cato.

This unabated cheerfulness of Plutarch, in such an age, is a very noteworthy phenomenon. For we are to remember that he was old enough to know, and even to see, the abominable life of Rome during the worst part of the first century. He was a student under Nero; seems to have been in Rome itself under Domitian; and was certainly contemporary, during the freshest part of his life, with that splendid, ghastly, sinful society, of which the Roman writers have left a picture so brilliant and



so terrible. The martyrdom of the Stoic philosophers ; the exile and murder of the brave and wise ; the bloody spectacles of the Circus, with its shivering wretches flung in among wild beasts ; the prosperous scoundrels of servile birth carried by in their rich litters ; the imperial harlots drawn by silver-shod mules ; all such things as these were to Plutarch what to our generation were the Reform Bill, the first appearance of Mr Thackeray's novels, or the opening of the new Italian Opera in Covent Garden. All that darkened the soul of Tacitus and maddened the heart of Juvenal presented itself to the young Chæronean on his first Italian tour. And then too he was a Greek, a native of that rich old Bœotia which, let the Attic wits laugh as they pleased, had produced Pindar and Epaminondas, but where now the meanest tool of the Roman despot was more potent than the descendant of native heroes and gods. He was a man of letters and a philosopher also ; and in these capacities were there not some additional miseries for him ? Was there not the pain of witnessing the degradation of such of his own countrymen, and they were many, as profaned those titles, *aretalogi*, *diners-out*, buffoons, legacy-hunters, parasites, who lived on the corruption of the city's luxury like the baser fish of the Tiber ? Was there not too the hack jeer of the upstarts of the time at all Greeks as "Greeklings," and all philosophers as babblers, to be borne ? Yet Plutarch lived through whatever of public or private wickedness and wretchedness he saw, with unspoiled temper, and the absense of any deep tinge of melancholy from his writings makes itself markedly felt. He lived as completely under the influence of books as the younger Pliny, and was for

ever thinking of the Past, without being made miserable by the contrasts which it forced upon him. Indeed, in his "Political Precepts," he indulges in a dry little laugh at those among his Greek contemporaries who kept harping on old Greek glories which they could never imitate. He wishes that they would try to renew some of the better qualities of the ancients, their moderation and self-denial, for instance, but thinks that Marathon and Plataea may at this time of day be left to the schools of the Sophists. The passage is worth remembering,\* since one charge against Plutarch has been an undue and mistaken admiration of antiquity to the exclusion of all sense of the difference of conditions between different ages.†

Mr Clough has some observations, in his Preface, on Plutarch's relation to the bad imperial reigns, which the reader will find especially interesting at this particular point which we have reached:—

"It may be said, too, perhaps not untruly, that the Latin, the metropolitan writers less faithfully represent the general spirit and character of the times, than what came from the pen of a simple Bœotian provincial, writing in a more universal language, and unwarped by the strong local reminiscences of the old home of the Senate and the Republic. Tacitus and Juvenal have more, perhaps, of the "antique Roman" than of the citizen of the great Mediterranean Empire. The evils of the imperial government, as felt in the capital city, are depicted in the Roman prose and verse more vividly and more vche-

\* See it in the *Πολιτικά Παραγγέλματα*, *Op.*, ed. Reiske, ix., 243.

† Lord Macaulay pushes this too far in his Essay (not reprinted) on "History" (*Edinburgh Review*, 1828).

mently than suits a general representation of the state of the imperial world, even under the rule of Domitian himself."

With Plutarch's philosophy, as a system, we are not particularly concerned on this occasion. He takes his proper place among the Neo-Platonists, and has been defined as "a Platonist tinctured with Orientalism."\* But it does behove us to know that, though philosophy did not give him his genius for biography, it gave him the motive for applying it, and that there is much in his philosophy which is noble and wise. He believed with all his heart, and it was a warm heart, in the Divine government of the world, in Providence, and Immortality. He believed most fervently that, in the long run, Good triumphed in the universe; and that, relying on so mighty a truth, a man ought ever to be ready to bear all and lose all for the sake of what his conscience and knowledge taught him to be right. Here, then, are the moral bases of Plutarch as a historian of the doings of men. That he knew anything of Christianity there is no evidence, but he preached the best principles accessible to human reason before Christianity was revealed. He rejected the more superstitious parts of his own faith, and detested the foreign additions which made it worse; and, if he officiated as a priest of Apollo, we know that he would do this in no blind, grovelling way. He loved Grecian traditions too well not to respect the old ceremonies of Grecian worship, and these would symbolise to him the higher ideas which his philosophy taught him, besides serving him as means for keeping alive in the people that reverence for the Unseen and Eternal without which man is meaner than the brutes.

\* Donaldson's "History of Greek Literature," iii., 178-182.



No generous reader but will think kindly of the old philosopher, the child of an age of buffoons and revellers, when he pictures him far away from the hum and splendour of Rome, going through the ancient rites of the temple at Delphi, in the rocky and secluded valley which still thrills the traveller with its loneliness.\* Without a kindly heart for such things, would he ever have represented so well to us the older Greek life at all?

There is no doubt, we repeat, that it was a philosophical motive which first set Plutarch writing "Lives." "I began them," he says *more suo*, "for the benefit of others, and continue them for my own" (*Timoleon*). "I am not writing histories," he tells us in a more famous passage, "but Lives." He meant, in fact, to exhibit the great men of the old times and preach upon them: to point a moral upon their virtues or their shortcomings for the benefit of well-meaning people generally: He had no literary object in view, strictly speaking, but one which he thought much higher. The philosophical schools of antiquity did not esteem literature, *as such*, so greatly as some may think. In the opening of his "Pericles," Plutarch lets us see very clearly his feeling on the point. He observes there that—

"No generous or ingenuous young man 'would' feel induced by his pleasure in their poems to wish to be an Anacreon, or Philetas, or Archilochus. For it does not necessarily follow," he proceeds, "that if a piece of work please for its gracefulness, therefore he that wrought it deserves our admiration. . . . But virtue, by the bare statement of its actions, can so affect men's minds as to create at once both admiration

\* I visited Delphi, the modern *Castri*, in 1844, when a midshipman of H.M.S. *Orestes*.

of the things done and desire to imitate them. . . . And so, we have thought fit to spend our time and pains in writing of the lives of famous persons" (*Clough*, i., 320).

In order to do justice to our biographer, then, we must always remember that this was his point of view, and that he would have esteemed criticism of his mere execution a very secondary matter. We must remember, also, that the writing his "Lives" in parallels was an essential part of his moral plan, and that the ancients, in quoting him, quoted the parallels and not the single Lives: talking of Plutarch's "Pelopidas and Marcellus," Plutarch's "Aristides and Cato" (each of which made a *book*), and so with the rest. Obviously, when there were two persons to compare, a moral could be twice as well pointed and enforced,—not to mention that the opportunity was excellent of reviving the glory of the old Greeks by placing them on an equality with the men whose race still governed the world in the writer's time. Again, the classifying and coupling men in this way, implied a previous conception of the character common to both: the conception of an idea or whole as material for each "book," to form which was evidently a philosopher's task. Hence the *unity* of Plutarch's great work, one of its chief titles to immortality. Every hero is at once measured by a moral standard and put in relation with some other hero. Over the whole performance a planning, creating spirit moves and breathes. Every Life helps you to understand and appreciate every other Life; each Greek is a Greek, and each Roman a Roman, but both are more perfectly understood by the opposition. The value of this use of parallelism, which Plutarch has contrived to identify with his name, extends over many

fields of intellectual inquiry, and might, we think, be beneficially employed still.

We cannot indeed assert that equal judgment is shown by Plutarch in all his selections of men for comparison. Sometimes he chooses a pair for their resemblance of character, and sometimes rather for a similarity in their destinies. Thus he joins Pelopidas and Marcellus because they were "both great men who fell by their own rashness"—the common quality of these warriors. But surely his motive for coupling Alcibiades and Coriolanus was only that both quarrelled with their own States, since they were quite unlike in disposition, and belonged to totally different kinds of life and civilisation. Cæsar and Alexander came naturally together to him, each being a conqueror representing also the cultivated intellect and ripe or over-ripe development of his time. Demosthenes and Cicero met by an irresistible affinity, in endowments, position, and fate, for his purposes. But if he was not always so happy, we must remember the difficulty of his task, seeing that, besides the infinite variety of human character, every man is more or less at the mercy of the conditions under which he finds himself placed. All things considered, his comparative unacquaintance with things Roman included, we are rather surprised that Plutarch has done so wonderfully well. How happily the austere virtue of Aristides sets off that of Cato the Elder ! How well Phocion and the younger Cato, the two ungenially virtuous men of decadent ages, both sarcastic reformers, and both failing in their reforms, suit each other !

Of course we must say something here of the ancient charge against Plutarch, that in working out these parallels

he is unduly favourable to his countrymen. Who can help liking his own people better than those of another country? But try Plutarch fairly. Compare his treatment of the Romans with that of the English by the French, or the French by the English writers, nay, with that of a Tory hero by a Whig historian, and *vice versa*! Consider the circumstances under which his judgments had to be delivered, subject as he was to any *proconsul* or *procurator* appointed by a Roman emperor! We are pretty confident that from such a thorough-going examination Plutarch would emerge not only an honest but a generous man. In his "Comparison of Fabius with Pericles," he says, "No action of Pericles can be compared to that memorable rescue of Minucius." In "Demosthenes and Cicero," he gives Cicero the preference in almost every point of character, except where he rebukes his vanity. In "Lysander and Sylla" he frankly pronounces the achievements of Sylla "beyond compare." He condemns the private life of Alcibiades, yet is not harsh in his narrative of that of Antony. And when he "sums up" between Cimon and Lucullus, he even goes so far as to say that if Cimon had lived to retire into an easy old age, *he* might have been luxurious and self-indulgent, too!

Has he not, we would now ask, been hardly dealt with in the matter of his authority as an historian? Critics have handled him very roughly on this score. They say that he contradicts himself sometimes; that he is too fond of a good story (Mitford's standing objection); that his military narratives are incorrect or imperfect; that he is not, in short, a severe, elaborate, and perfectly trustworthy historical writer. Now, considering that he has left fifty

biographies,\* ranging over the events of some thirteen hundred years, from Theseus downwards, it would indeed be madness to expect from him unvarying accuracy of detail. Nor did he ever intend to be an original historian, like his contemporary Tacitus, to be a fountain of authority, that is, to succeeding ages. He assumes that you know the general facts, and only aspires to show you the men, in his capacity of a didactic and moralising biographer. He draws you the figures and actions of history, as it were, in the Bayeux tapestry, with running titles more copious and instructive than those of that old work of art, but he does not pretend to supersede the chroniclers. These are his portraits with his remarks; are they *like*? We take it that *that* is the question for the critic of Plutarch. He is vague in his accounts of Sertorius's campaigns. Very true. But does he not, in spite of this, delineate the man Sertorius faithfully? He repeats some dubious anecdotes of Pericles; yet, may we not suppose that Pericles was much such a person as he, *on the whole*, would have us think him to be? Observe, too, that there is never a trace of malignity perceptible in Plutarch, whatever anecdotes he may be telling. If he errs, it is from over-fondness for stories. He knew that stories illustrated character, and did not, perhaps, always sufficiently remember that no stories at all about a man would be better than

\* Forty-six arranged in parallels, and four (*Artaxerxes*, *Aratus*, *Galba*, *Otho*) which stand by themselves, and did not originally belong to this collection. Several parallel lines are lost, of which Epaminondas and Scipio the Younger must be deeply regretted. Eight "Comparisons" are missing, and the order in which the lives now stand is not the original one.



inexact ones. Yet he constantly shows his honesty of intention by qualifying them with "as Hermippus says," or, "so Theopompus reports," etc. And this way he has of making a confidant of the reader helps to cement his familiarity with one. We get to know, and even to relish his weak points, just as we are rather amused than bored by the occasional digressions on physics and such subjects, which he winds up so naïvely with, "but enough of this," or, "this, however, rather belongs to another occasion!" The fact is, that he wrote the "Lives" in his latter years, under the mild sway of Trajan, and that he must be excused for occasional garrulity. It was a Greek weakness from which not even philosophers were exempt.

But we must not suppose that the "Lives" are without historical value apart from their biographical charm. Do we ever meet a modern work on Greece or Rome for some part of which Plutarch is not a leading authority? If, as Byron says,—

"Mitford in the nineteenth century,  
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie,"

—does not his frequent reference to him betray his sense of his importance? We encounter his name in the footnotes of the lucid page of Grote, and Bishop Thirlwall says that he is always entitled to attention. His reading is admitted by all men, Niebuhr included though his tone is patronising, to have been immense. Parts of "Antony," one of his best biographies, are indispensable to Roman history. He uses and he quotes many a work which sunk long ago under the waves of time, the Memoirs of Sylla, and Augustus, and Delliis (our old friend "*moriture*

*Delli* ") included, for, as Heeren remarks in his valuable treatise,\* he seems always to have used autobiographical works when he had an opportunity. Now, if being, as he admits, no first-rate Latin scholar, he still refers to so many Latin authors as we find him citing, what may we not suppose to have been his general information? Undoubtedly we are not always in a position to test him. But in some cases we are. We have, for example, as abundant material for judging Cicero's real character as that of any great historical personage. Now, we are among those who think with respect and kindness of that great man; and we should be quite content to accept, generally and substantially, Plutarch's account of his career and disposition.

Suppose, however, that we now turn to that feature of Plutarch which admits of less controversy, to which he owes his peculiar moral value and wide-spread European fame, to his genius as a biographer. *There* he reigns supreme. A certain eye for the seizure and presentation in a "Life" of a great personality was to him what dramatic genius was to Shakspeare, or the faculty for telling a story to Livy. It was an instinct, working in him all his days, and finding him incessant employment in his old age. He fancied, the good man, that he was only a philosophical teacher, helping the new generation to be good boys. In reality he was as much a genius and an artist as any of his countrymen who helped to build or adorn the Parthenon. Perhaps he was in great measure unconscious of this; and so much the better.

All genius, of course, rests on a moral basis, and is

\* *De Fontibus et Auctoritate Vit. Par. Plutarchi.* Göttingen, 1820.

mixed up, for good or evil, with the personal character. In Plutarch's case, a heartfelt reverence for the great and the good was blended with a human sympathy which made him long to know great and good men familiarly, long to be able to *connect* that which was transcendant and heroic in them with that which they shared with everyday mankind. Here was Plutarch's object, not to recognise nobleness only, which all healthy, clear-sighted minds do, not to gather personal and private details only, which the tattler and gossip do after their kind; no, but to seize the relation between them! He wanted to make the little things about a hero throw light on the great things about him. He yearned to know him in his entirety. Why he should have been able to achieve the result he arrived at in literature is Nature's secret, very jealously kept. But this was his ideal; and this constitutes his originality. There are biographers who deal with the hero, and biographers who deal with the man. But Plutarch is the representative of ideal biography, for he delineates both in one. Even if a writer should appear who did the work better, he could not improve on the thought, which ought to secure Plutarch a place among the creative spirits of the world. It is no exaggeration to say, that his faculty was Shakspearian in kind if not in degree; and when Shakspeare went, as we have seen, to the old Greek for material, he did not only find marble there, he found statues ready hewn. The poet owes nearly as much to the biographer as the biographer to the poet.

The next thing we would point out is, that Plutarch keeps his familiar details in subordination. He first thinks of his great man *as* a great man before busying himself



with the domestic touches (highly as he values them) necessary to the full portraiture. So, his hero's dignity loses nothing, which is a very important consideration. A writer of mean parts may be "graphic" by working up little items of description with care; but to seize a character or event as a whole, and only use details as accessories, requires high intellect. When you close your "Plutarch," after reading, say his "Themistocles," your first thought is of the complete character, daring, subtle, generous, but with a dash of something ostentatious or theatrical about it. You do not reflect how skilfully this *is done*, but how life-like it *is*. Only afterwards, and on further examination, do you perceive how admirably the *minutiae*,—trifling each in itself,—have fallen into their proper places. That as a schoolboy he was ambitious and prominent among his fellows; "that the trophy of Miltiades would not let him sleep;" his pointed sayings; the dog that swims alongside one of the galleys when Athens takes to the sea; Xerxes' gold chair and such things; are distributed so judiciously through the narrative that they give it animation and reality without being obtrusive.

When once, however, we have recognised his grasp of character in all its width and variety, we may indulge ourselves, not improperly, in studying the charm of his handling of details. The quantity of anecdotes and *bons-mots* which he has accumulated in these "Lives" is wonderful. He had a passion for them, and occasionally (with a weakness seen in other old gentlemen) tells them over and over again. He follows his heroes from school to public life and home again, peeps into their family circle, tarries with them over the wine, watches how they bear prosperity and

misfortune, and lingers by their death-beds, or bends down to them as they lie dying on the battle-field, to catch their last words, and see how they face their last trial. Everything, he thinks, that a man can say or do shows character; and why write biography if not completely? As he is always reverent and kindly, he never offends by this copiousness; while his subjects are personages of such historical importance, that hardly anything they do or say can seem quite trivial.

The sayings which Plutarch records are even more welcome than his anecdotes, and have many of them passed into familiar use in modern times. It completes the character of a great man if he talks greatly, as many of Plutarch's men did; and, whether or no, we are better acquainted with him by having specimens of his familiar speech. It is worth remarking too that the men of action have usually been better talkers than the men of letters—or were so at least in antiquity. The latter might *discourse* more richly in conversation, but did not equal the soldiers and statesmen in those brief, terse, solid *dicta* which strike like cannon-shot, being propelled indeed by the explosive force of a great individuality. Pompey's exclamation that if he stamped his foot in any part of Italy troops would spring up, and the "*Cæsarem vehis!*" of his greater rival and conqueror, affect one more than those brilliant pleasantries of Cicero's, which Plutarch has preserved to the number, if we recollect right, of nineteen. We would note too, that the sayings attributed to his heroes by Plutarch, generally bear intrinsic evidence of their genuineness, and harmonise with the descriptions he gives of their habits of mind and thought. Thus, those of Themistocles

are showy and splendid; of Phocion, curt and sharp; of the elder Cato, grave and shrewdly humorous. Plutarch is indeed, here and elsewhere, one of our chief authorities for the table-talk of the ancients.

While his attention to the particulars just mentioned does much for the fulness and richness, the body and colour, of his portraiture, Plutarch is equally to be praised for his backgrounds—for the scenery and accessories of his art. He gives fine delineations of the circumstances under which his men acted or suffered, and so stamps the reality of his narrative on the reader's imagination and memory. As specimens of these, we would point to the rejoicings at Naples when Pompey recovered from his illness; but especially to the death-scenes of Demosthenes, Cicero, and the younger Cato. The figure of the Greek orator, staggering from the altar of the Temple of Neptune, with the poison seizing his vitals, haunts the memory like a ghost. That of the Roman orator, trying, while he is being hunted for his life, to snatch a little rest, and the story how the crows swarmed ominously round the house and into the very chamber, are not less impressive; while, whose feelings are not stirred strangely, on reading of the last night which the stoic of Utica spent alive, and how "the birds began to sing" as he rose to bare his breast to the sword? A gentle sensibility to all that is picturesque, and especially to whatever is tender and melancholy, makes much of the charm of Plutarch. He is not a writer who owes much to *style* in its strict and limited sense, or who is ever compared in that respect to the masters of Attic prose. The old critics seem all agreed that his "dictio" is "*duriuscula*." Dr Donaldson pronounces that "he is not a good writer of

Greek." His handling of admirable material on a free broad scale is his great merit, though of course there are flashes of genius where the expression, too, makes itself remarkable. He was a philosopher with his head full of great ideas, and an artist with his heart full of the images of mighty men—men who were the flower of two great races.\* Nothing tawdry, nothing effeminate, nothing petty attracted him. If he liked trifles, it was only when they were characteristic of men about whom everything was interesting, or when their mention relieved his sunny and affectionate nature after those serious and lofty studies which were the business of his life.

Vivid moral portraiture, this was Plutarch's great object and his successful achievement. We do not think he aimed at any special triumph as a writer, with this or the other political view. He wanted great men with marked characters, that they might illustrate general moral ideas, the best a pagan knew. He found them in different countries, and in different causes.

The superiority of Plutarch as a writer of "Lives" over any surviving classic is undoubted. Cornelius Nepos is an acute and elegant biographer, but his "Lives" are not portraits. Suetonius, who flourished in Plutarch's old age, has likewise high merit. He is a lively and forcible narrator, and brings together an immense deal of material, not only solid and valuable, but curious, minute, and piquant, about his Cæsars. Yet the inferiority of his

\* Of forty-nine Greeks and Romans (the entire number of *Lives*, excluding *Artaxerxes*) whom he has celebrated, at least thirty-nine were of the royal, noble, or ancient families of their respective countries; a strong testimony to the worth of the classic aristocracies!

method, of classing successively by themselves the wars, political acts, tastes, or personal habits of the men, is very marked. His "Lives" lack unity, and the writer himself lacked the eye for dramatic character and poetic delineation of Plutarch. We know, in short, only one ancient biography with which it would not be a kind of degradation to Plutarch to compel him to compete. Of course, we are thinking of the "Agricola" of his great contemporary, Tacitus. The profundity and subtlety, the deep tragic pathos, relieved by the most brilliant and piercing wit of that immortal historian, must undoubtedly place him above the mark of the humbler though not less genuine artist of Chæroneæ. His is a more potent nature altogether, as wine is stronger than milk; and Plutarch must give way before him, as his countrymen before the eagles of Rome. But though there is a condensed force about the "Agricola," with its weighty aphorisms and burning epigrams, which Plutarch cannot rival, we may still doubt if he is not as successful in his portraiture as Tacitus, though in a less impressive and, on the whole, inferior style: at all events, he is infinitely more fit for popular reading. His amiability gives him a hold on the general heart like Goldsmith. He is above no reader, and below no reader. And as he connects the studies of the public with those of the scholar, so he brings together the modern and ancient worlds by showing how much that is good and noble is common to both.

The time is now come to consider how the example of Plutarch as a biographer has affected the art of biography in modern times. His general influence, allowing for the many successful translations of his "Lives," has, no doubt,



been very great on the English as on other literatures. Probably every English biographer has known something of him, and learnt something from him. And it is a singular testimony to his merit, that so few should have produced any "Lives" that will bear the least comparison with his.

It is not a hopeful sign for our biography that every dunce should think himself entitled to sneer at Boswell for no other reason than that he had a transcendent veneration for one of the greatest and best men this country ever produced. Boswell was, no doubt, an inferior man to Plutarch, but he had quite enough in common with him to deserve that the likeness between them should be pointed out. A hearty reverence for worth was the *primum mobile* of literary exertions in both. The virtues of these great men, Plutarch says—

"Serve me as a sort of looking-glass, in which I may see how to adjust and adorn my own life. Indeed, it can be compared to nothing but daily living and associating together; we receive, as it were, in our inquiry, and entertain each successive guest . . . and select from their actions all that is noblest and worthiest to know.

'Ah, and what greater pleasure could one have?'

or, what more effective means to one's moral improvement? Democritus tells us we ought to pray that of the phantasms appearing in the circumambient air, such may present themselves to us as are propitious, and that we may rather see those that are agreeable to our natures and are good, than the evil and unfortunate; which is simply introducing into philosophy a doctrine untrue in itself, and leading to endless superstitions. My method, on the contrary, is, by the study of history,

and by the familiarity acquired in writing, to habituate my memory to receive and retain images of the best and worthiest characters."

Boswell, with all his weaknesses, might honestly have professed as true a love of greatness as the Greek. But their resemblance was more marked in the homelier qualities. They both loved talk and stories, and had strong personal and local attachments. A writer might have greater parts than either of them, and not produce half their effect, just for want of their peculiar disposition. And we may be perfectly sure of one thing, that the kind of man utterly unfit for biography is the model "clever man," full of the "enlightened epoch" notions, so fashionable just now. The whole moral being of such a man would have to be changed before he could loyally picture, at once in its majesty and its simplicity, a great character of the past. Fulke Greville's romantic friendship, Izaak Walton's old-fashioned tenderness, are out of his range. But there will be no high things done in biography till we learn to revive that gentle old spirit, and apply it in forms suitable to our own age. Talent alone never produced a great "Life," and never will. The "Agricola" ends in a burst of passionate affection like a choral wail. Johnson's "Life of Savage" is full of his friendship for the unlucky reprobate whose society had cheered his solitude and poverty in his early London days.

Hoping, however, that the truths here expressed may one day bear literary fruit, what else may we learn in biography from Plutarch's example? His method of writing lives in "parallels" it would be very difficult to imitate, though that feature of his plan should not be abandoned



without reluctance. His copious employment of detail there is a growing disposition to appreciate, to an extent which we perceive is already producing a reaction. Ever since the *Waverley Novels* appeared there has been a set in favour of a dramatic and picturesque treatment of history. There was nothing new in the tendency, as the superiority of the older over the newer translations of Plutarch, in such respect, might alone serve to convince us. The feeling for reality and completeness in literary art is, of course, substantially sound. Let us, by all means, have past ages reproduced with all their circumstances and conditions if possible, not only their principles and ideas and actions, but manners, costume, furniture, and ornaments. Let the classic man sacrifice in his garland, and the feudal man hear mass in his mail. On all this, it is, in the present temper of the reading world, superfluous to insist. But let us bear in mind also, that Plutarch never overdoes it, and yet that it may be overdone. It is not the deepest fact about the seventeenth century that people wore steeple-hats, and went out to fight in buff jerkins, though such details assist one in getting familiar with things more important.

Again, we may learn from Plutarch that good biographies are not necessarily long. Nine or ten of his go conveniently into an octavo volume. This merit he shared with the ancients generally. The "*Agricola*" is a pretty little pamphlet. The "*Cæsars*," in Suetonius, are as portable as a handful of their coins. Now, this is a mighty advantage, for a good book that is short will be read far oftener than a good book that is long. Our own earlier "*Lives*," those, for instance, which Wordsworth calls

“Satellites burning in a lucid ring  
Around meek Walton's heavenly memory,”

are of moderate as well as graceful proportions. The bulk of Middleton's “Cicero” is accounted for by the extent of the subject. Johnson is uniformly reasonable ;—his “Milton” occupies eighty-five, and his “Dryden” a hundred and eighteen pages. But it would not be difficult to point to “Lives” of men as inferior to Milton or Dryden as the biographers themselves to Johnson, filling six and ten times the space.

But, after all, Plutarch will be read by thousands who care nothing for the art of biography, and to whom critical disquisitions on the subject can be little attractive. It is time to return to them, before bidding him farewell. There is now no danger of his influence being otherwise than good. The “classical republican” is extinct, or, where he survives, begins, we suspect, to see that there were nobler things in antiquity than the dagger of Brutus. We now learn from classical history just the opposite lessons to those which it was once thought to teach ; while the revolutionary movement in Europe has thrown off the toga, finally, and sticks to the blouse, which is its more appropriate garment. On the other hand, a growing sense among the best English youth of the value of our history as the basis of our political liberties prevents us from apprehending any spurious classicism from the influence of the ancients. Much as there is to learn from the Greeks and Romans, their special influence is not likely to disturb the minds of statesmen and potentates again. Meanwhile, the charm of Plutarch as a writer remains unbroken. He will be read for many an age, under the influence of that

“nature” which makes Greek and Roman “kin” to Englishman and Scot. Many a reader will secretly ask himself what *he*, living in a brighter light of knowledge, ought to be, when heathens and pagans could live and die like Plutarch’s men. Nor will he forget to thank the memory of the wise, kind-hearted old biographer himself.

Plutarch, we repeat, will be read, and read, we think, among ourselves, for the future, in the version of Mr Clough. We have given that version our cordial praise before, and shall only add, that it is brought before the world in a way which fits it admirably for general use. The print is clear and large, the paper good, and there are excellent and copious indexes.



## THACKERAY.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, January 1864).

### PREFATORY NOTE TO THE FIRST REPRINT.

I HAVE ventured to reprint this sketch of the illustrious writer, whom England has just lost, because it is the *fullest*—if I am not mistaken—which has yet appeared in any periodical. A mere rhapsody of admiration is generally inspired by the writer’s wish to be admired, himself; but men of sense will, it is hoped, be thankful for a careful accumulation of the kind of details on which alone a judgment about character can be formed. These have been

grouped together here, with the object of making Mr Thackeray's Life and Writings illustrate each other, as far as the humble scale of the essay—and the strict reticence imposed by the recentness of his loss—permit. The more fully his life is made known to the world, the more clearly will the harmony of his works with it appear. Perfect frankness and honesty of character will be seen to be his great distinction. He laid bare all his severest thoughts about human nature, and life, in obedience to the law of this character, though he knew it exposed him to shallow charges of cynicism, and though he cannot but have been conscious of unaffected benevolence towards all the world, of a ready sympathy with every form of excellence, and of a hearty activity in doing good to everybody who came in his way. On this honesty, as a basis, rested the whole of his genius, the positive side of which produced his deep and truthful delineations of life; the negative his hearty and pleasant satire, always Horatian rather than Juvenalian, always exciting Mirth rather than Hate. If he ever erred in literary judgment at all, it was when his anxiety to do justice to the weak made him press a little hard on the strong. This is curiously illustrated in a passage which the reader will find quoted from one of his letters at p. 52.

There was nothing more charming about Mr Thackeray, and this too receives illustration in what follows, than the kindly footing on which he stood with the younger generation. He was not a man to have a little senate; he held sycophants, and all who encouraged them, in contempt; his friends and acquaintances were of all varieties of class and character, and differed from him in their ways of thinking about everything. But he made it a duty to befriend and

cherish anybody in whose merit and sincerity he believed, however casual the accident which had brought them under his notice. These are the traits which endear his memory to all who knew him, and which will pleasantly connect him henceforth in their minds, with the best and greatest of the humourists and moralists to whom he is now gathered.

EDINBURGH, *Jan. 4, 1864.*

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. . . . "Crasso nihil statuo fieri potuisse perfectius. Erat summa gravitas; erat cum gravitate junctus facetiarum et urbanitatis oratorius, non scurrilis lepos; Latine loquendi accurata et sine molestia diligens elegantia; in disserendo mira explicatio; . . . quum de æquo et bono disputaretur, argumentorum et similitudinum copia."

—CICERO.

"Let us love his Memory, and profit by his Example."

—POPE *on Fenton's Death.*

By birth Mr Thackeray belonged to the upper middle class, a section of our curiously divided society which contains many cadets of old families, and forms a link between the aristocracy and the general bulk of the liberal professions. He used sometimes to say that "it takes three generations to make a gentleman;" and though this was not a maxim which he would have applied strictly in the case of another man, he was far from insensible to the advantage in himself. He was descended from an old stock, apparently of Saxon origin, long settled in Yorkshire. His great-grandfather was Dr Thackeray, of Harrow, who went to Cambridge in 1710, an excellent scholar and clever man, who



partly educated Sir William Jones, and whose epitaph was written by his pupil Dr Parr. The son of the Doctor married a Miss Webb, of the old English family to which the Brigadier Webb, of Marlborough's wars, belonged,—whose portrait is drawn with something of the geniality of kinship in "Esmond." This Thackeray, we believe, was the first of the race to settle in India; where his son also sought his fortunes; and where his grandson the novelist was born—at Calcutta—in 1811. There are numerous descendants of the scholarly old Headmaster of Harrow scattered over the English Church, and in the Indian Service, and traces of the influence of family connections are found all through the books of the man who has made his name famous. The feudal feeling of Scott, which in any case is Scotch rather than English, Thackeray did not share. Heraldry to him had only the quaint interest and prettiness of old china. But it is impossible to appreciate either his philosophy, his style, or his literary position, without remembering that he was a well-born, well-bred, and well-educated gentleman.

Like other English children born in India, young Thackeray was sent home early, and the voyage, during which he had an eager and wondering peep at the great Napoleon in his island prison, was among his earliest recollections. He received his education at Charterhouse, the well-known Greyfriars of his stories, an old and famous public school. He somewhere talks of the "monkish seclusion" of his school-days, and in his critical and questioning moods he has sufficiently proved that he knew the weak points of the old educational system. But he never lost an opportunity of showing his respect for Charter-

house, and he was perfectly aware how much he owed to it. In after-life, he let most of his Greek slip away ; but his acquaintance with the Latin language, and especially the Latin poets, was eminently respectable, and exercised a profound influence over his genius and his diction. The Odes of Horace he knew intimately well, and there are subtle indications of the knowledge, the smell of Italian violets hidden in the green of his prose, only to be truly enjoyed by Horatians. A quotation from Horace was one of the favourite forms in which he used to embody his jokes. If you bored him with genealogy, he would begin—

“Quantum distet ab Inacho,”

which was quite a sufficient hint ; and when a low fellow in London hanged himself, he observed that it was a “dignus vindice nodus.” Latin writers, French writers, and English eighteenth century men were the three sources at which his genius fed, and on which it was nourished.

From Charterhouse he went to Cambridge, which he left without taking a degree ; and he entered on life with health, strength, a noble figure, an excellent genius, and twenty thousand pounds,—the last of which blessings was the first (owing, it is said, to unfortunate speculations) to leave him. But this loss was not complete, till he had had the full benefit of a good culture and a good experience. He travelled over Europe, and resided in its capitals, while his mind was young and fresh, and laid in those stores of observation to which we owe sketches with which everybody is familiar. He had an interview with Goethe at Weimar, his description of which may be seen in the “Life of Goethe” by Mr Lewes ; and he studied art at



Rome. If he had had his choice, he would rather have been famous as an artist than as a writer; but it was destined that he should paint in colours which will never crack and never need restoration. All his artist experience did him just as much good in literature as it could have in any other way; and, in travelling through Europe to see pictures, he learned not them only, but men, manners, and languages. He read German; he knew French well and spoke it elegantly; and in market-places, *salons*, hotels, museums, studios, the sketch-book of his mind was always filling itself. Paris was one of his most important headquarters in every way, and to his stay there the world owes perhaps the best of his poems—the “Chronicle of the Drum.” His poetic vein was curiously original. He was not *essentially poetical*, as Tennyson, for instance, is. Poetry was not the predominant mood of his mind, or the intellectual law by which the objects of his thought and observation were arranged and classified. But *inside* his fine sagacious common-sense understanding, there was, so to speak, a pool of poetry,—like the *impluvium* in the hall of a Roman house, which gave an air of coolness and freshness and nature to the solid marble columns and tessellated floor. The highest products of this part of his mind were the “Chronicle” above mentioned, the “Bouillebaisse,” the lines on Charles Buller’s death at the end of one of his Christmas Books, and the “Ho, pretty page with dimpled chin” of another of them. A song or two in his novels, and some passages in which rural scenery is quietly and casually described, might also be specified. But all this is chiefly valuable as showing that his nature was *complete*, and that there wanted not in his genius that softer and more sen-

sitive side natural to one whose observation was so subtle and his heart so kind. He was essentially rather moralist and humourist, thinker and wit, than poet; and he was too manly to *over-work* his poetic vein as a man may legitimately work his mere understanding. This honourable self-restraint, this decent reticence, so natural to English gentlemen, was by some writers of the Gushing School mistaken for hardness. The Gusher is always for plenty of sentimentalism;—for showing his heart on his sleeve, after having previously inflated the vessels of that organ with wind to make it look bigger. This kind of thing was not in Thackeray's way, and wide as his sympathies were, he despised it. "I shall not try to describe her grief," he makes Sam Titmarsh say in the "Hoggarty Diamond," "for such things are sacred and secret; and a man has no business to place them on record for all the world to read." Few of his sentences are more characteristic.

Thackeray was still young and opulent when he began to make the acquaintance of London men of letters. Certain it is, that he lent, or in plainer English, gave five hundred pounds to poor old Maginn, when he was beaten in the battle of life, and like other beaten soldiers made a prisoner—in the Fleet. With the generation going out,—that of Lamb and Coleridge,—he had, we believe, no personal acquaintance. Sydney Smith he met at a later time; and he remembered with satisfaction that something which he wrote about Hood gave pleasure to that delicate humourist and poet in his last days. But his first friends were the Fraserians, of whom Father Prout, always his intimate,—and Carlyle, always one of his most

appreciating friends, survive. From reminiscences of the wilder lights in the *Fraser* constellation were drawn the pictures of the queer fellows connected with literature in "Pendennis,"—Captain Shandon,—the ferocious Bludyer,—stout old Tom Serjeant,—and so forth. Magazines in those days were more brilliant than they are now, when they are haunted by the fear of shocking the Foggy element in their circulation; and the effect of their greater freedom is seen in the buoyant and unrestrained comedy of Thackeray's own earlier *Fraser* articles. "I suppose we all begin by being too savage," is the phrase of a letter which he wrote in 1849; "*I know one who did.*" He was alluding here to the "Yellowplush Papers" in particular, where living men were very freely handled. This old, wild satiric spirit it was which made him interrupt even the early chapters of "Vanity Fair," by introducing a parody, which he could not resist, of some contemporary novelists. In the last fifteen years of his life he wrote under greater restraint, and with a sense of his graver responsibilities as one of the leading men of letters of the country. But his satire was never at any time malignant; and the fine freedom of his early writing developed his genius as the scenes of the arena developed the athlete. He was writing for twelve or thirteen years, as a professional author, before "Vanity Fair" made him really known to the world at large. The best works of that epoch will be found in the "Miscellanies" published by Bradbury and Evans in 1857. But there is much of his writing buried in periodicals, some of which have been long dead. He was connected with at least one failure, the *Parthenon*, an ill-omened name borne after a long

interval by another journal quite recently defunct. He certainly contributed some things to the *Times*, during Barnes' editorship,—an article on Fielding amongst them; though not, we should think, leading articles; a kind of work for which he had no relish, and for which he believed himself to have no turn. *Fraser* was the organ with which he was most successfully connected till the days of his *Punch* engagement. It was indeed as a magazinist that he educated himself for a novelist. With a playful reference to his early and never-forgotten ambition to be an artist, he called himself Michael Angelo Titmarsh, and published under that name, not only articles but books. The "Paris Sketchbook," the "Second Funeral of Napoleon" (comprising the "Chronicle of the Drum"), the "Fatal Boots," the "Hoggarty Diamond," the "Irish Sketchbook," the "Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo," sufficiently attest his activity during the years which preceded the great epoch of "Vanity Fair." These books are full of sense, and wit, and humour, and it seems extraordinary that their author should have been within a year or two of forty before he was really famous. Their very truthfulness, however, the easy quiet of their best philosophy, the slyness of their choicest irony, the gentlemanly taste of their heartiest *abandon*, all this was *caviare* to the vulgar, including the vulgar of the critical press. The offer of "Vanity Fair" was declined by one publisher; and good judges said that a necessary impulse was given to its appreciation, by an article during its progress in the *Edinburgh Review*. It was still the fashion, as far as it was fashionable to speak of Thackeray at all, to treat him as a satirist. An admirable satirist he had, indeed, just proved

himself in the "Snob Papers," a series that stands high above anything ever given to the world in *Punch*, excepting Hood's "Song of the Shirt." Nor was Thackeray ever ashamed of the title of satirist, knowing by what great men it had been borne before him, and how much honest work there was in the world for satire to do. But that he was a satirist only, he had proved, long before the "Snob Papers," to be absurd. Anybody who can read, for instance, the story of Sam Titmarsh's sufferings and the loss of his child, after the Diddlesex catastrophe, in the "Hoggarty Diamond," without seeing that the writer's tenderness and power of representing tenderness were exquisitely deep and exquisitely real, may conclude himself disqualified by nature for having an opinion on literary matters. There are few whose judgment on such things is worth much,—but his is certainly worth nothing.

When Thackeray wrote "Vanity Fair," in 1846, '7, '8, he was living in Young Street, Kensington,—a street on your left hand, before you come to the church; and here, in 1848, the author of this sketch had first the pleasure of seeing him, of being received at his table, and of knowing how essentially a kind, humane, and perfectly honest man he was. "Vanity Fair" was then unfinished, but its success was made, and he spoke frankly and genially of his work and his career. "Vanity Fair" always, we think, ranked in his own mind as best in *story* of his greater books; and he once pointed out to us the very house in Russell Square where his imaginary Sedleys lived,—a curious proof of the reality his creations had for his mind. The man and the books were equally real and true; and it was natural that he should speak without hesitation of his



books, if you wished it ; though as a man of the world, and a polished gentleman who knew the world thoroughly, literature with him only took its turn among other topics. From this point of view, his relation to it was a good deal like that of Scott. According to Lockhart, people were wrong in saying that Sir Walter declined at all markedly to talk about literature, and yet his main interest was in active life. Just so, Thackeray was not bookish, but still turned readily to the subject of books, if invited. His reading was undoubtedly large in Memoirs, Modern History, Biography, Poetry, Essays, and Fiction,—and, taken in conjunction with his scholarship, probably placed him, as a man of letters, above any other novelist except Sir Bulwer Lytton. Here is a characteristic fragment from one of his letters, written in August 1854, and now before us:—"I hate Juvenal," he says; "I mean I think him a truculent brute, and I love Horace better than you do, and rate Churchill much lower; and as for Swift, you haven't made me alter my opinion. I admire, or rather admit, his power as much as you do; but I don't admire that kind of power so much as I did fifteen years ago, or twenty shall we say. Love is a higher intellectual exercise than Hatred; and when you get one or two more of those young ones you write so pleasantly about, you'll come over to the side of the kind wags, I think, rather than the cruel ones." Passages like this,—which men who knew him will not need to have quoted to them,—have a double value for the world at large. They not only show a familiar command of writers whom it is by no means easy to know well,—but they show what the real philosophy was of a man whom the envious represented to the igno-

rant as a cynic and a scoffer. Why, his favourite authors were just those whose influence he thought had been beneficial to the cause of virtue and charity. "I take off my hat to Joseph Addison," he would say, after an energetic testimony to his good effect on English life. He was, in fact, even greater as a moralist than as a mere *describer* of manners; and his very hatred of quackery and meanness was proved to be real by his simplicity, humanity, and kindness of character. In private, this great satirist, whose aspect in a crowd was often one of austere politeness and reserve, unbent into a familiar *naïveté* which somehow one seldom finds in the demonstratively genial. And this was the more charming and precious that it rested on a basis of severe and profound reflection, before the glance of which all that was dark and serious in man's life and prospects lay open. The gravity of that white head, with its noble brow, and thoughtful face full of feeling and meaning, enhanced the piquancy of his playfulness, and of the little personal revelations which came with such a grace from the depths of his kindly nature. When we congratulated him, many years ago, on the touch in "Vanity Fair" in which Becky "*admires*" her husband when he is giving Lord Steyne the chastisement which ruins *her* for life, "Well," he said, "when I wrote the sentence, I slapped my fist on the table, and said '*that is a touch of genius!*'" The incident is a trifle, but it will reveal, we suspect, an element of fervour, as well as a heartiness of frankness in recording the fervour, both equally at variance with the vulgar conception of him. This frankness and *bonhomie* made him delightful in a *tête-a-tête*, and gave a pleasant human flavour to talk



full of sense, and wisdom, and experience, and lighted up by the gaiety of the true London man of the world. Though he said witty things, now and then, he was not a wit in the sense in which Jerrold was, and he complained, sometimes, that his best things occurred to him after the occasion had gone by! He shone most,—as in his books,—in little subtle remarks on life, and little descriptive sketches suggested by the talk. We remember in particular, one evening, after a dinner-party at his house, a fancy picture he drew of Shakspeare during his last years at Stratford, sitting out in the summer afternoon watching the people, which all who heard it, brief as it was, thought equal to the best things in his Lectures. But it was not for this sort of talent,—rarely exerted by him,—that people admired his conversation. They admired, above all, the broad sagacity, sharp insight, large and tolerant liberality, which marked him as one who was a sage as well as a story-teller, and whose stories were valuable because he was a sage. Another point of likeness to him in Scott was that he never overvalued story-telling, or forgot that there were nobler things in literature than the purest creations of which the object was amusement. “I would give half my fame,” wrote Scott, “if by so doing I could place the other half on a solid basis of science and learning.” “Now is the time,” wrote Thackeray, to a young friend in 1849, “to lay in stock. I wish I had had five years’ reading before I took to our trade.” How heartily we have heard him praise Sir Bulwer Lytton for the good example he set by being “thoroughly *literate!*” We are not going to trench here on any such ground as Thackeray’s judgments about his contemporaries. But we may notice an excellent point bearing on these. If he

heard a young fellow expressing great admiration for one of them, he encouraged him in it. When somebody was mentioned as worshipping an eminent man just dead,—“I am glad,” said Thackeray, “that he worships anybody.”

After “Vanity Fair,” Thackeray’s fame steadily increased. “Pendennis” appeared during 1849 and 1850, and though it was generally considered inferior in mere plot to its predecessor, no inferiority was perceived in the essential qualities of character, thought, humour, and style. The announcement in the summer of 1851 that he was about to lecture on the English Humourists gave a thrill of pleasure to intellectual London; and when he rose in Willis’ Rooms to commence the course with Swift, all that was most brilliant in the Capital was assembled to hear him. Amidst a throng of nobles, and beauties, and men of fashion, were Carlyle, and Macaulay,—Hallam with his venerable head,—and Charlotte Bronte, whose own fame was just at its height, and who saw in the lecturer her ideal of an elevated and highminded master of literary art. The lectures were thoroughly appreciated. Everybody was delighted to see the great masters of English of a past age brought to life again in their habits as they lived, and endowed with the warm human reality of the lecturer’s Dobbins, and Warringtons, and Pendennises. It was this power, and not the literary criticism, which constituted the value of Thackeray’s Lectures, and will secure their place in the biographical literature of the country.

Towards the close of 1852, “Esmond” appeared, and Thackeray sailed for America.\* “Esmond” constituted a

\* He recalled the present writer from a tour in Scotland in October, and placed the MS. of the “Humourists” in his hands to edit and annotate during his absence.

new epoch in his career. By this time his celebrity, and the impression made by his distinct and peculiar genius,—so different from that of the common sentimental schools,—had provoked a certain amount of reaction. Plebeians who disliked him as a gentleman,—Mechanics' Institute men who disliked him as a scholar,—Radicals who knew that he associated with the aristocracy,—and the numerous weaklings to whom his severe truth and perfect honesty of art seemed horrible after the riotous animal spirits, jolly caricature, and lachrymose softness of the style which he was putting out of fashion,—this crew, we say, was by no means satisfied with the undoubted fact that Thackeray was becoming the favourite writer of the cultivated classes. They accordingly began to call his honesty cynicism, and his accuracy reporting. But tears are pure in proportion to the depth from which they come, and not to the quantity in which they flow, and the tenderness of a writer is to be estimated by the *quality* of his pathos. What these people called hardness was fidelity to truth, and what they called stenographic detail was finish of art. The richer imaginativeness of "Esmond," and the freer play of feeling in which the author allowed himself to indulge when dealing with a past age, came in good time to rebuke cavillers, and prove that Thackeray's mind was rich as well as wide. "Esmond," we take it, is the favourite novel of his choicest admirers. He takes certain liberties with history in it. For instance, the Duke of Hamilton, whom he represents as about to marry Beatrix when he is cut off in a duel, left a widow, spoken of by Swift in the "Journal to Stella." But as Scott makes Leicester quote the "Midsummer Night's Dream" in "Kenilworth," when

Shakspeare was about twelve or thirteen years of age, this may be excused.

It is a pity that Thackeray did not write expressly on America, for we think that he would have written the most impartial English book to which that country has yet given rise. When he returned from this first visit, he was a good deal away from town. "Since my return from America," he writes in August 1854, "I have hardly been in London at all, and when here, in such a skurry of business and pleasure as never to call a day my own scarcely." The passage is significant. Few lives were more engrossed than his, discharging, as he did, at once the duties of a man of letters and a man of fashion. He dined out a great deal during the season. He went to the theatres. He belonged to three clubs, the Athenæum, Reform, and Garrick, to say nothing of minor associations for the promotion of good fellowship. With less of this wear and tear, we should have had more work from him,—should have had, perhaps, the History which long dwelt in his imagination as one of the creations of the future. As it is, he achieved a great deal during the last eight or ten years of his life. Two such elaborate novels as the "Newcomes" and "Virginians," a second trip to America, and a ramble over Great Britain, with a new set of Lectures, on the "Four Georges,"—not to mention a contested election, and what he did for the *Cornhill*, established on the strength of his name, and for a time directly conducted by him,—these were great doings for a man who, though naturally robust, was plagued and menaced by more than one vexatious disorder of long continuance. And he did them greatly,—going into the

world gaily and busily to the last, and always finding time for such holy little offices of personal kindness and charity as gave him—we believe and know—more real pleasure than all his large share of the world's applause. He was much gratified by the success of the "Four Georges" (a series which superseded an earlier scheme for as many discourses on "Men of the World") in Scotland. "I have had three per cent. of the whole population here," he wrote from Edinburgh, in November 1856. "If I could but get three per cent. of London!" He thoroughly appreciated the attention and hospitality which he met with during these lecturing tours. And if, as would sometimes happen, a local notability's adoration became obtrusive, or such a person thrust his obsequious veneration upon him beyond the limits of the becoming, his forbearance was all the more respectable on account of his sensitiveness.

Latterly he had built himself a handsome house in Kensington, to which he moved from Onslow Square, Brompton,—his residence after leaving the Young Street in which he wrote "Vanity Fair." It was a dwelling worthy of one who represented literature in the world, and who, planting himself on his books, yet sustained the character of his profession with all the dignity of a gentleman. A friend who called on him there from Edinburgh, in the summer of 1862, knowing of old his love of the Venusian, playfully reminded him what Horace says of those who, regardless of their sepulchre, employ themselves in building houses :—

"Sepulchri

Immemor, struis domos."

"Nay," said he, "I am *memor sepulchri*, for this house



will always let for so many hundreds (mentioning the sum) a year." How distant, then, seemed the event which has just happened, and with which the mind obstinately refuses to familiarise itself, though it stares at one from a thousand broadsheets! Well, indeed, might his passing-bell make itself heard through all the myriad joy-bells of the English Christmas! It is long since England has lost such a son,—it will be long before she has such another to lose. He was indeed emphatically English,—English as distinct from Scotch, no less than English as distinct from Continental,—a different type of great man from Scott, and a different type of great man from Balzac. The highest purely English novelist since Fielding, he combined Addison's love of virtue with Johnson's hatred of cant, Horace Walpole's lynx-like eye for the mean and the ridiculous, with the gentleness and wide charity for mankind as a whole, of Goldsmith. *Non omnis mortuus est*. He will be remembered in his due succession with these men for ages to come, as long as the hymn of praise rises in the old Abbey of Westminster,\* and wherever the English tongue is native to men, from the banks of the Ganges to those of the Mississippi.† This humble tribute to his illustrious and beloved memory comes from one whom he loaded with benefits, and to whom it will always throw something of sadness over the great city where he first knew him, that it contains his too early grave.

\* "Dum Capitolium  
Scandet cum tacita virgine Pontifex."

† "Dicar qua violens obstrepit Aufidus," etc.



## A LETTER TO AN ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMER.

*(Idler, March 1856).*

MY DEAR BARNABAS,—I was very much surprised the other day, when, on calling at your oil and pickle warehouse, I learned that you had just gone out to reform the British Constitution. I had called to give my usual order for gherkins and red cabbage, and to have, may-be, a chat with you, when your young gentleman (for so he calls himself)—I mean the foreman—said, with some emphasis, that Mr BLOGG was at the London Tavern on important business. “What,” said I, “has this war—confound it!—raised the price of vinegar?” “Sir,” said he, “Mr B. is not concerned, now, with the rise in vinegar, but with the fall of Kars!” This was an antithesis which pleased me, and I came away speculating on the state of affairs which has brought us to a condition when quiet fellows like yourself feel bound to rush into political business headlong.

But I was still more astonished at a later period, on perusing a speech and a pamphlet by my old acquaintance. Mr Blogg is changed, indeed;—I scarcely know him in his new character. The “degradation of England”—“infamous imbecility of our oligarchy”—“right man in right place”—“men of business at the helm,”—why, bless me, is this our old Barnabas? I knew you to be head of a good old business house—a man of brains, in your way,

and well off,—and I never expected you to be so violent. The style is as strong as your chilis. They have got hold of you, Mr Blogg, I mean the clique of ambitious Cockney bores and boors, of whom we have heard so much lately; they have turned your head and spoiled your temper; and you have made an exposure of yourself which your best friends must long regret. As an old customer, I am sorry to see this exhibition. But you are unhappily become exactly a “representative man,” an embodiment of a vast amount of existing cant, stupidity, mistake, and misrepresentation; and I have a duty to perform! I must endeavour to improve your temper by an application of the *flagellum*. You have lost your old kindliness;—I must try and awaken it by some such process as is found to increase the affectionateness of elderly gentlemen. In fact, I must criticise your speech and pamphlet, and see what sort of case is made out by your Morleys, Corduroys, etc., etc., who seem engaged in a conspiracy to get the government of the country into the hands of the wholesale trade.

As for the style, spirit, intellectual force, of you and your friends, I tell you frankly I don't think much of them. Your rhetoric is not so good as your walnuts; and if you do no better in your warehouses than you do on the platform, I pity your families. To be sure, I may be prejudiced; for, as a man of letters, I have naturally read many great orators and famous pamphlets. But I think everybody agrees with me here; for you complain that the country does not listen to you; and the *Times* (which created you) pronounces you a failure. How is this? Do people think that you make a very ordinary show, that

you have none of you produced anything but stale suggestions and old platitudes? If I were an Administrative Reformer, I would consider that possibility. It is not very likely that you are too able and pure for public life (as I see one of you suggests), since, if so—if nobody will listen to ability and purity—our country is plainly come to a dead stop. Indeed, Barnabas, *entre nous*, I would drop this last suggestion. Give Corduroy a hint : of course he does not mind being laughed at, or he would never have come into public life; but we shall doubt his sanity if he asserts that England is hopelessly corrupt, and he, Mr Corduroy, a sensible, honest fellow.

However, “talk” is not your “line;” you’re “men of business,” and so forth. Very well. You are right in assuming this point. I think you must see, that if oratory is in question, none of you are likely to match Lord Palmerston, or Lord Derby, or even Lord John Russell. But—stop a bit. In your plan of reform, do you mean to retain debating bodies? Do you mean to have cultivated men in leading positions? If so, you must have oratorical talent, whether you admire it or not. This, let me remind you, is a democratic necessity—not an aristocratic one. Debating was of little consequence in the really aristocratic and kingly days. I think it a misfortune that men are chosen in this country for government too much by their power of oratory: but this is one of your democratic evils. In France, where it had full play, it played itself out finely—as in Rome it had played the same game long before. In both these countries a fellow was chosen to govern the people on the ground that he had amused them.

We agree in this, do we? I presume so; for your

favourite doctrine is, let us have practical men; and a practical man is not necessarily a speaker.

Well—you, Barnabas, are a practical man. You have “covered the ocean with your pickles;” your “gherkins are in every land where the language of England is spoken.” Bravo! Let us hope that *the practical talent required for conducting a nation is the same as that required for conducting a business*. I don’t believe it, Blogg; and I’ll tell you why.

First, there’s that plaguy House of Commons. The people will have it; it’s a free people,—and it must. So, speakers we must have, better than you (I’m candid), and better than Morley or Corduroy. Then, there’s the state of social cultivation of the age. We must have gentlemen to conduct our affairs.

Take a case—the Peace Conferences. I suppose Clarendon’s imbecile, since he’s an earl,—though, by-the-bye, Chatham’s mother was a Villiers, and the Pitts never produced a great man till after that marriage. But *nang-port*, as you would say; assume that C. is imbecile, how the deuce would a man of business make a plenipotentiary? How would he tackle Brunow and Buol? There’s yourself, Barnabas; why, Brunow would fancy you had come in for the coal-scuttle the moment you entered the room. But, joking apart, government consists, the highest part of it, in managing men, in knowing men, in dealing with foreign statesmen, in conciliating powers at home and abroad. It is infinitely more delicate an affair than conducting operations determined only by money interests. You may be a capital hand in managing Bodger and Staggs of Rio, in deciding on the goodness of a bill, and yet be

unfit to negotiate with Louis Napoleon, or to pronounce on a despatch from Constantinople. In fact, politics requires an education incompatible with the simultaneous cultivation of a money business; and this is best secured in a hereditary order.

You bellow. What, the aristocracy? They are effete, you say, both in your speech and your pamphlet. The English people talk more nonsense about aristocracy than any people in Europe; and just at present that nonsense is at its height.

Lord Derby, who is almost as able a man as yourself, observed some time since that he could not quite understand in what sense the term aristocracy was used now-a-days. I see with pleasure that your association does not mean to destroy the House of Peers.\* But I see that you delight also in reviling the "aristocracy," as if everything that went wrong was the fault of some one mysterious body of men so called. What is the aristocracy? If you mean an ancient privileged body of great families tyrannizing over the masses by virtue of blood, I answer that there is no such body in England. There is a House of Peers, which in point of blood is not exclusive, for it is full of the descendants of the Bloggs and Corduroys. And if you come to blood,—I want to know why that section of it so seldom turns out a fellow worth his salt, and why all its ablest men come from the ancient families? You gape. This is the fact, Barnabas. Take the men from Lord Halifax to Lord Derby,—the Bolingbrokes, Mansfields, Erskines, Chesterfields, and Byrons, from the black-guard Lord Wharton, to the pious Lord Lyttelton; to a

\* This is kind of Blogg. See his pamphlet. (Noodles and Co., 1856).



man the best of them were of the regular old tap. When, therefore, you tell me the House of Peers does not produce men to meet the crisis, I answer, first, that it is not true; secondly, that if it was, it would be as much the fault of the people as the families.

But this is the only country in Europe where aristocracy is confounded with peerage. This is the only country where a fellow who has won his coronet by jobbery, and wears it on a numskull, is called "noble," to the exclusion of the gentlemen of the kingdom, the *gentilshommes*, Barnabas, I mean, whom Coke and Selden knew to be noble, and whom Mr Hallam knows to be noble in the strict ancient sense of that term. I cannot expect you to have studied the question. But I can tell you, that if you assert that the ancient blood of the kingdom does not produce able men in every sphere of activity, you babble mendaciously. Our two greatest seamen are noble, Donald and Napier; our statesmen, Derby, Palmerston, the Greys (I take them from all sides), are usually able in exact proportion as they are gentle. The greatest philosopher living, Sir William Hamilton, is of most ancient family; Bulwer, Landor, Thackeray, are of good descent. Anything in blood you ask? *EST, EST PROPECTO ILLA VIS*—to adopt an expression of Cicero's. For great historical facts are not to be put down, and *RACE* is one of them. Mr Disraeli is of the aristocracy of the Jews, the Sephardim; so was Spinoza. We owe our Indian empire to two very well descended men, Clive and Hastings; we owe the best literature of the century to three very well-born men, Byron, Shelley, and Scott.

And here a word of caution. One really great man,



such as Byron or Scott, outweighs a whole generation of little fellows; so don't come down on me with a host of every-day notabilities. Ten donkeys don't make a horse; ten geese don't equal an eagle. It is part of the Cockney philosophy of the time to believe that everything depends on numbers, as if men were like onions, of which two are better than one, and so forth. But the truth is, that the excellence of the world, and the work of the world, belong to a few, who in all ages govern the many, and lead them and teach them; and the earth would not be habitable if this were not the case. Ask Mr Carlyle, who, you may be sure, looks on your "Administrative Reform Association" as the greatest humbug of the age. To return.

It is not, then, that "blood" has proved a failure, dear B.; and by abusing the "aristocracy" you really do no harm to any sensible man's faith in it. I think our administration very bad, but not for the same reasons as you do. The faults which are found in our administration are part of the godless, mechanical aspect of the age, a characteristic lying far deeper than Morley's yard-measure will ever penetrate. But I can tell you that a very great part of our administrative evils are owing to "British freedom;" to the fact that ministers are turned out one after another, so that statesmen are at the mercy of clerks; to the necessity of finding places for boobies of electors and provincial idiots; to the necessity of employing fellows because they can "jaw," in the House or out of it, etc. These are all democratic evils, however. That certain families have more power than others, is owing to their property; and that property is omnipotent, we owe to the general worship of wealth, which is nowhere more

conspicuous than among your class. "The power of money, as the world is now constituted," said Lord Bolingbroke, in 1733, "is real power; and all power without this is imaginary." The Pelhams, Russells, Cavendishes, and such families, owed the continuous influence they exercised in the last century to their wealth. When the Clintons took up the Pelham succession, they became powerful politicians too. Since the Sutherland, Gower, and Howard properties have become so united, that connection has become potent and formidable. Now, assuming that property is power, I am prepared to show that it is better that landed property should have the sway, than the kind of property which your party represent.

The honour of England is obviously a matter of greater personal importance to these families than to yours, for nobody in Europe knows the names of your families, and everybody in Europe knows those of Howard and Stanley. Now, admitting that, as a general rule, a firm is conducted with more success than a Government,—I must repeat, that it does not follow that he who can do the first can do the second. As a Radical, you probably hold the selfish philosophy. Will a man, taken from his counting-house to Downing Street, have the same motives to work early and late, in a place out of which he must be turned in a year or two, to make room for a fellow who has been "chaffing" him from the Opposition, that he had to work equally hard for his fortune, and his children? I believe you will answer, No. But is it a case of willingness to work only? Take the Crimean failures, which occasioned all this discussion. Did everything depend on Newcastle's willingness to work? Why, it is not denied that he fagged like a

copying-clerk. No. But before an order of his (and it was his business to order) could turn up, executed, on the hills of the Crimea, it had to go through office after office, referred here, copied there, according to what is called the "system;" and its execution depended on a whole string of men from Downing Street to the office at Balaklava. "Ah, but Frederick the Great would have ——" Yes, Barnabas; but have you considered how? By courts-martial and despotic power. Give a man the power to shoot and imprison, or, like old Francia, to hang a tailor who doesn't do his work, and you'll get it better done. The Czar gets it famously done by such processes. But British liberty, you see, my Barnabas, interferes here. In fact, once more we find democracy at the bottom of the mischief. Yet there are idiots who taunt us with the superiority of France in administration,—a superiority owing to her despotism; and the same idiots think they are doing democracy a good turn thereby.

But, to be consistent, Blogg, your association should, instead of talking about the "right man," have produced the right man. That would have settled the question. You were asked for a Cromwell, and you produced Mr Tite. As for Mr Layard, his services to ancient Nineveh are much more important than to modern Babel. I see no proof that he is a practical man, except as an antiquarian. He is not even a very good speaker. His suggestions are few. His accusations are often false. I should go in for him in preference to any of you, of course, because he is a man of culture. Hence, my surprise at his public appearances,—

"ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ  
ἵτ' ἴστίν ἀνδρὸς."

“Demagogy is not the work of a cultivated man,” says Aristophanes. He should leave it to such misguided blockheads as met, t’other day, to try and get off Pam’s head, which has more in it than all their shaggy skulls together. To such as one of their orators,—from whose *os impurum* comes balderdash and bile,—whose nature is like a chimney on fire, hot and sooty, dirty and dangerous,—I may apply another sentence of the Attic satirist :—

“τὰ δ’ ἄλλα σοι πρόσσιςτι δημαγωγικά·  
φωνὴ μισρὰ, γίγonas κακῶς, ἀγόραιος εἶ”

“All qualities combine, all circumstances,  
To entitle and equip you for command,  
A filthy voice, a villanous countenance,  
A vulgar birth, and parentage, and breeding” (*Frere*).

Such men are fit for such work ; but not Mr Layard.

I think, my Barnabas, that we do want new men in the administrative department. But I don’t think we want your kind of men ; and I don’t think we shall do any good by throwing our faults exclusively on one class. Statesmanship is a profession,—the noblest of all. I wish the rising aristocracy would remember that fact, and labour a little more than they do to qualify themselves for it. I wish more of them were like Lord Stanley. I wish there was as much opening as there was in Queen Anne’s time, for men of parts and of study, to those positions where the business of the state is to be learned,—for a man cannot walk out of the city into Government, and become an *impromptu* administrator, as your friends seem to think. I wish there was less agitation, and more education. But I cannot consent that a set of fellows like you should assume to be representatives of the middle classes.

I know that your triumph would saddle us with a *mere* money Government; whereas a mismanaged historicomied Government is better. I believe your class would fail if they were tried,—that after money-grubbers and blockheadism, we should have Chartism and violence. The old heraldic writers (of whom I am rather fond) tell us that “the lion when sick cureth himself with the blood of an ape.” But this is a dream of antiquity; and no more than I believe it, do I believe that the sick British lion can derive his healing from the administrative reformers.

I am, dear Barnabas,

In sorrow *and* in anger,

Your friend,

BARNABAS BLOGG, Esq.,

X. X. X.

Oil and Pickle Warehouse, City.



## PROFESSOR RAMSAY.\*

(*Edinburgh Courier*, February 1865).

MR RAMSAY was the descendant of a family of great antiquity in Perthshire. For six centuries at least, the Ramsays of Bamff have held land in the south-eastern corner of that county. Sir Gilbert Ramsay of Bamff, Knight, was created a Baronet in 1666; and from this gentleman, the late Professor—a third son of Sir William, the seventh

\* Mr Ramsay died at San Remo.



Baronet—was lineally descended. Born at Edinburgh in February 1806, he received his first education at the High School during the rectorship of Mr Pillans. He also attended the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, from the last of which he proceeded to Cambridge. He was still an undergraduate at Cambridge when he undertook the duties of the Glasgow Mathematical Chair, which he discharged for two years. In 1830, he graduated at Cambridge; and in 1831, he was chosen to succeed Mr Walker as Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. It was during his long tenure of that office that his chief influence was exercised, and his reputation as a scholar acquired. Successive batches of our Scottish youth passed through his hands, to Oxford, to Cambridge, to the Bar, the Church, and other employments,—diffusing through the whole social body the good effects of his admirable training. Mr Ramsay was a strict and accurate teacher, who, acting up to a high standard of duty himself, expected that others should share his elevation of feeling. The idle and careless probably thought him severe; and his keen, rapid clearness of intellect must have made stupidity a painful thing for him to deal with. But he inspired lasting respect and affection in his best pupils, many of whom now hold posts of honour and influence in the world; and the contact of his vigorous mind, and dignified gentlemanliness of tone, must have benefited every nature not naturally incapable of receiving good impressions. So far, Professor Ramsay's influence, though wide and deep, was comparatively limited in its range. But his writings extended it over the empire, and made him known and esteemed wherever British scholarship penetrated. In 1840 appeared his



“Extracts from Tibullus and Ovid;” in 1851, his “Roman Antiquities;” in 1858, his edition of the “Pro Cluentio;” and soon afterwards an enlarged edition of his “Manual of Latin Prosody.” Most of these works have been widely circulated; all are executed with an admirable completeness, neatness, and finish, and are used as text-books by the best schoolmasters. But the literary power in its highest sense, of Professor Ramsay, is seen to greatest effect in the biographies which he contributed to the well-known Dictionaries bearing the name of Dr William Smith. His “Cicero,” for instance, is a masterpiece of lucid and vigorous narrative and disquisition. He writes a fine, clear, unaffected, and, so to speak, *bracing* kind of English style, free from every taint of the impurities and affectations of the age; classical equally in its directness, wholesomeness, and manly grace; healthful as the waters of the Eurotas, transparent as the atmosphere of the Ægean. Master of his subject at first-hand to begin with, he uses all the erudition, ancient and modern, British and German, illustrative of it, with the independent common sense of a vigorous and accomplished man of the world. There is no pedantry or prolixity, no useless theorising or dreaming, about the writings of William Ramsay. All is plain, practical, homely, business-like, the work of a man whose general culture was as good as his professional culture, whose mind, liberalised and refined by honourable family traditions, to begin with, had been early enriched by the experiences of society and travel, and was habitually kept fresh by communion with the best literature of his own generation. He knew his Thackeray as he knew his Horace; did not disdain to amuse himself with a novel of Paul de

Kock, any more than with an epigram of Martial; and would discuss the social life of the ancients with as keen a relish for its humanity as for the latest reading in a text suggested by Orelli or Classen. To the sturdiest industry as as a scholar, he added the warmest interest in life, and its ordinary pursuits and enjoyments. In his healthy days, he was an ardent sportsman and a capital shot. He was one of the earliest amateurs in photography. He would leave the coins of the Ptolemys to criticise with a rural eye a new litter of porkers, and passed genially from a corrupt passage in Plautus to speculate on the disease which of late years has attacked the larch trees.

Many a heart will now turn wistfully to the recollection of those summers and autumns at Rannagulzion, made so charming by his cordial and lettered hospitality, and by the spectacle of a dearly-loved home, rich in the attractions of domestic affection, and a graceful and simple refinement, when all the hues of heaven were on the trees in that romantic glen leading down to the valley of the Ericht, and the woods of Craig Hall. Nowhere was Mr Ramsay happier than there, during his well-earned holiday,—though a holiday in which the great studies of his life went steadily on. With sad and yet sweet tenderness, his friends will recall that cheerful library, of which the windows looked far over the ancient clump of holly trees planted by the Abbots of Coupar-Angus, and through an opening in purple hills, to the distant plain of Strathmore. The wild beauty without was an admirable *setting* for the cultivated comfort within,—the rows of excellent editions clothed with sober splendour,—the piles of MS., fruits of many a patient hour,—the drawers of curious coins,—the

modest but beautiful traces of a love of ancient art. But the great charm of the room was the room's master,—always kind, cordial, simple;—full of shrewd, pleasant, critical talk, with a gleam of humour in it like that of his keen blue Northern eye; rich with varied information; and suggesting by everything about him,—his compact, well-formed head prematurely grey, his straight lithe figure and frank independent manner,—a character of perfect reality and honesty, based on a profound sense of the divine government of the world, and the high destiny and responsibility of man. Such was William Ramsay, and as such will his friends, and those dearer even than his friends, love to remember him, when the sharp pain of separation has been mercifully healed by time, and much that cannot be recalled without suffering, now, has become the source of a new pleasure as one of the solemn and tender possessions of the past.

Mr Ramsay resigned his Chair in May 1863, amidst expressions of admiration and regret from his colleagues, which touched him deeply; and passed the following winter in Rome, with which city he was previously well acquainted. He employed himself there in collating the most important MSS. of Plautus, an author on whom he had long laboured. His Prolegomena and his text of some portions of Plautus must, we think, be ready, or nearly so, and will, we hope, be given to the world by the nephew who succeeded him in the Glasgow Chair. But, undoubtedly, his ill-health and death have deprived us of much important work that he was quite ready to execute under favourable conditions. Enough remains, however, to secure him a permanent place among the scholars of this

age ; and Scotsmen will long remember with pride and pleasure the name of a man who has helped to keep alive the ancient literary glory of the land of Buchanan.



## CAXTONIANA.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, December 1863).

How many of Sir Bulwer Lytton's novels will be generally read a century hence is a question on which we hardly like to pass an opinion. But critics and literary historians will, we think, recur to his writings as illustrating more copiously than those of any other man of his time the changes of taste and opinion during a part of the nineteenth century. From the nature and constitution of his mind, he has always reflected himself in his books, and by the same law his craving for popular sympathy and admiration has made him dress himself so as to look his best in the mirror of contemporary fashion and opinion. He is now—though scarcely an old man—the oldest of England's favourite writers. He was famous twenty years before Tennyson or Thackeray, and a dozen years before Dickens ; and he still continues to keep his popularity, and trim sails to the changing breeze of public favour. When Sir Bulwer Lytton began life, the anti-Byronic reaction—(which, as we have elsewhere said,† was set going by Byron

\* *Caxtoniana : A Series of Essays on Life, Literature, and Manners.* By Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Bart.

† *Satire and Satirists.*

himself in "Don Juan") was dominant. The world was tired of mysterious heroes, children of passion and gloom; and Peacock and Disraeli had introduced the lively satirical novel of modern life. "Pelham" was Bulwer's contribution to this movement, and its run showed how effectively he had contrived to hit the prevailing feeling. But the "Wilhelm Meister" element—thanks to Carlyle's translation, and other influences—was also spreading amongst the rising youth of the age, and the Novel of Art, Culture, and Philosophy was to have its day amongst us. Without renouncing his pleasant comic worldly vein, the author of "Pelham" became the author of "Godolphin," the "Disowned," and "Earnest Maltravers." This class of fictions, none of them repetitions of each other, but all marked by a family likeness, became the representatives of a Bulwerian philosophy which turned the heads of most of us while under twenty, though the cleverest of us would be puzzled to say what the philosophy was. The Ideal and the Beautiful were largely insisted on. The True—though never exactly defined—was constantly recommended to us. And there was something peculiarly fascinating in the ease with which our heroes were represented as having attained a mastery of what were called the Mysteries of Life. Prodigious classical attainments seemed to have come to them without effort. Damsels of voluptuous beauty fell into their arms,—of course without the preliminary prose of matrimony,—but what was more curious, without there being much wickedness in the seduction. The hero was such a wonderful fellow that your astrologer's daughter came to him to be loved, or your peasant's daughter to be educated, whether he sought the



little innocent or not. In fact, he was obeying his Destiny. And he talked so finely to the Stars in any case, that nobody had the heart to be hard upon him. The triumph of this kind of thing was in "Eugene Aram," where the hero who had committed a murder was escorted to the gallows amidst the tears of whole circulating libraries. All he had done was to knock a low fellow on the head in order to be able to purchase the best editions of the classics. We fear that when we first read that book, we were prepared to immolate Podger in the cause of Kuster's "Aristophanes" or the "Lucian" of Hemsterhuys. But as years rolled by, we came to see that, clever as it was, "George de Barnwell" was cleverer; and that—its morality apart—there was something wretchedly melodramatic in making Aram happen to go and live just where his victim's relations did, and fall in love with one of them. His soliloquies, too, are sad bombast when tried by the standard of any lofty poetry; and the whole business smells of the paint-pot and the theatrical lamp.

In all these stories, however, there was one distinctive feature—the writer went about his work in the spirit of an artist. There was a coherence and completeness about each book which no other novelist of the time has so uniformly sustained; and in seeking materials to work from, the writer gradually and naturally enlarged his conceptions of life. As he has changed his name from Bulwer to Lytton, so there is a Lyttonism of his later years which is quite unlike Bulwerism, and is a great improvement upon it. "Harold," for instance—(which we once heard Thackeray call a "fine piece of old tapestry")—is a vast advance upon "The Last Days of Pompeii" and the in-



tolerable staginess of "Arbaces of the Burning Belt,"—clever and picturesque as the novel is. But the real first book of Sir Edward's later manner is "The Caxtons." Without "Tristram Shandy," there would have been no "Caxtons," of course. But to make "The Caxtons" out of "Tristram Shandy" required a man of talent for all that. The public taste had now changed. There was a revival of interest in the Queen Anne men. Thackeray was beginning to be profoundly influential. The boys whom "Maltravers" had fascinated were getting married, and escaping from the illusions of youth; while the generation younger than they, were growing up, not in the Bulwerian faith, but as believers in Tennyson, Carlyle, Thackeray, Browning, Ruskin, Kingsley, and so on. Sir Edward was equal to the occasion. He converted old enemies by writing like a sober, thoughtful, moral, unaffected, middle-aged gentleman; and he made new friends by meeting the demand for a simpler, more realistic, more domestic style of fiction. He has now a set of admirers who only care for his Caxton Novels, who would think "Pelham" flippant, "Maltravers" immoral, and "Harold" a little heavy; and those who sat up all night at sixteen flying through "Godolphin" by the aid of a surreptitious light, wonder to find their old divinity—now a wise old gentleman in a dressing-gown—preaching to them on the vanity of Posthumous Reputation! In the good old days, the hero of the beloved books only talked in that style when he washipped, when Annabel's adoration bored him, or when he was exhausted by a little too much study of Plato.

But the Essay has now had a revival, like other forms of literature once out of fashion, and here is Sir Edward

still master of the situation. The Essay is an old friend of his, as all who know his "Student" are aware, and it must be pleasant to him to find the public again disposed to enjoy that species of composition. We can hardly fancy him anywhere more at home. His Novels are full of the essay element,—not only as being full of himself, but of that kind of clever disquisition which is derived from a critical study of life and books. He is therefore an essayist by a double right, and with a relation to two schools of the art,—an essayist after the order of Montaigne, and an essayist after the order of Macaulay. No doubt, he has to introduce the personal element in the quiet indirect way demanded by the reticence and reserve of modern manners,—but it is there. And though he never writes as a reviewer, the papers are full of the kind of criticism which we expect in reviews. It is curious to a reader who knows Sir Bulwer Lytton's books well, to see how subtly personal feeling permeates his opinions in the book before us. There is nothing more important, for instance, in the history of his career, than that he has failed as a poet. This is the secret of his throwing peculiarly cold water on the poetical ambition for future renown; and of his yet hinting at the same time that what a man's contemporaries are most likely not to appreciate is his poetry. Just so, he has always been divided between a contempt for what he used to call the Herd in imitation of the ancient philosophers, and a feeling that they must often be right since they bought his books. The "Caxtoniana" throws a great deal of light on his other works to anybody who knows how to study it, and thinks it worth while to take the trouble. It is interesting to find him faithful, among

many changes, to his old belief in the Ideal in art. He sturdily repudiates all the kind of portraiture which the realists give us, and holds by the divine power,—the clairvoyance,—of the imagination. Here is a clever specimen of his doctrine:—

RICHARDSON AND LOVELACE.

“Certainly if there were any creature in the world whom a quiet prim respectable printer could never have come across in the flesh and the blood, it would be a daring magnificent libertine—a *roué* of fashion the most exquisitely urbane—a prodigal of wit the most riotously lavish. It was only through clairvoyance that a Richardson could have ever beheld a Lovelace. But Richardson does not only behold Lovelace, he analyses and dissects him—minutes every impulse in that lawless heart, unravels every web in that wily brain. The refiners on Shakespeare who would interpret his life from his writings, and reduce his clairvoyance into commonplace reminiscence, would, by the same process of logic, prove Richardson to have been the confidential valet of Wilmot, Lord Rochester; or, at least in some time of his life, to have been a knavish attorney in the Old Bailey of love.”

Indeed he goes so far as to ask us to believe that a man might describe the Nile better without ever having seen it, than he could describe a lake with which he was familiar. The truth, we take it, is that he suspects his own characters of lacking flesh and blood,—which, compared with those of Scott or Thackeray, they certainly do,—and that he therefore holds to the superiority of air and moonlight. Another instance of this ever-present habit of introspective reference is afforded by the passages which we are about to quote:—

LITTLE PLAGIARISTS AND BIG ONES.

“In truth, the more we examine the alleged evidences of Le

Sage's plagiarism, the more visible the originality of his 'Gil Blas' becomes. It is the same with all writers of first-rate genius. They may seize what they did not inherit with an audacity that shocks the moral nerves of a critic, yet so incorporate in their own dominion every rood of ground they annex that the result is an empire the world did not know before.' Little wits that plagiarise are but pickpockets; great wits that plagiarise are conquerors. One does not cry 'Stop thief!' to Alexander the Great when he adds to the heritage of Macedon the realms of Asia; one does not cry 'Plagiarist!' to Shakspeare when we discover the novel from which he borrowed a plot. A writer's true originality is in his form—is in that which distinguishes the mould of his genius from the mintage of any other brain. When we have patiently examined into all Lawrence Sterne's alleged thefts, collated passages in Burton's 'Anatomy' with passages in 'Tristram Shandy,' the chief amaze of a discerning critic is caused by the transcendent originality with which Sterne's sovereign genius has, in spite of all the foreign substances it laid under contribution, preserved unique, unimitating and inimitable, its own essential idiosyncrasy of form and thought. True, there are passages in 'Tristram Shandy' taken almost literally from Burton's 'Anatomy.' But can any book be less like another than Burton's 'Anatomy' to 'Tristram Shandy?' When you have shown us all the straws in a block of amber, and proved to our entire satisfaction that the amber had imbedded the straws, still the amber remains the amber, all the more curious and all the more valuable for the liberty it took with the straws."

#### THE FLUCTUATIONS OF FAME.

"Among the rising generation, neither Scott nor Byron, according to the invariable laws to which the fluctuations of fame are submitted, can receive other than the languid approbation with which persons speak of a something that has just gone out of fashion without having yet acquired the veneration

due to antiquity. In proportion as a taste in authorship, architecture, in the arts of embellishment—down even to those employed on furniture and dress—has been carried to enthusiasm in its own day, is the indifference with which it is put aside for some new fashion in the day that immediately succeeds. Let time pass on—and what was undervalued as rococo, becomes again, if it have real merit, the rage as classic. I am not therefore at all surprised when a young lady, fresh from the nursery, tells me that all Lord Byron ever wrote is not worth a stanza by a Mr Somebody, of whom, out of England, Europe has never heard; nor does it amaze me when a young gentleman, versed in light literature, tells me he finds Scott, as a romance writer, heavy, and prefers the novels of a Mr or Miss Somebody, whose very name he will have forgotten before he is forty. When suns set, little stars come in fashion. But suns re-arise with the morrow. A century or two hence, Byron and Scott will not be old-fashioned, but ancient; and then they may be estimated according to their degree of excellence in that art which is for all time, and not, as now, according to their place in or out of the fashion, which is but of a day. Milton and Shakspeare were for a time out of fashion. So, indeed, was Homer himself."

Can anybody doubt that the resemblance of "The Caxtons" to "Tristram Shandy" prompted the first of these pleasant little dissertations?—and the author's failure to achieve poetic renown the second?

Of course, there are portions of these essays the originality of which is dubious, an inevitable thing when a writer discusses what has a hundred times been discussed before. But, on the whole, they are most agreeable reading; shrewd, lively, graceful, and thoughtful always; in style, bookish though never verbose, while habitually elegant; in tone and temper genial, manly, and gentle-



manly. The knowledge of literature which they show, is something of which we have no experience in Scotland in the present generation, and for that, as well as for their fluent and finished English, they ought to be sedulously studied on this side of the Tweed.

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## A SKETCH.

(*Puppet-Show*, 1848).

Now that the reign of pillories is o'er,  
And stocks confine the "patriot" no more,  
What splendid prospects open on the sight,  
Of realms illumined by O'Connor's light !  
Of tailors sitting cross-legged on a throne,  
And making laws—and small-clothes—of their own ;  
Of private soldiers making monarchs bleed,  
And shoeblacks polishing a nation's creed ;  
While purblind tradesmen, by delusion queer,  
Trust those in Government they won't for beer !  
In yonder narrow street, that crowded hall,  
With dirty tables, and a whitewashed wall,  
Sees forty "patriots," daily met to bawl :  
With cautious step, soft gliding through the den,  
Armed with our pencil, we will sketch the men.

As on a dunghill, 'mongst the feather'd race,  
He who crows loudest holds the highest place,  
So here, the noisest brawler leads the rest,  
The worthy offspring of a rebel nest—  
Feergus,—still used to share, for many a year,  
The poor man's profit, and the rich man's sneer ;



For who, within our dark and foggy clime,  
 Prefers hard labour to unpunished crime?  
 Say, who would till the land, or plough the deep,  
 If lies could clothe him, and sedition keep?  
 Better than shuttle, anvil, spade, or flail,  
 The workman's dole, derision, and the jail.

Next on our list, see yonder babbler rise,  
 Whose glasses half conceal his goggle eyes;  
 He gilds, with harlot ornaments, his lead,  
 And writes at once for buttermen and bread—  
 Skilled in describing all the burglar race,  
 Or raising blushes on a virgin face.

Eccentric Cuffey, shalt thou miss the pen,  
 Bravest of tailors—foolishest of men?  
 Shall he triumphant from the lash escape,  
 Whom Nature's self stamped kinsman of the ape?  
 Or England's laws be altered at his will,  
 When no clown trusts his breeches to his skill?—  
 When such are leaders, who would dare describe  
 All the inferior creatures of the tribe?  
 Sad will be England's fall, if fall it must,  
 And these shall gibber o'er the sacred dust!



## THE SCOTTISH NEW YEAR'S DAY.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, January 1865).

THERE are few things more characteristic of a nation than the way in which it keeps its holidays; and the whole subject is one on which nations seem apt to run into extremes. That the Catholic countries of Europe overdo the

matter, is what few sensible and moderate observers will deny. If you go into the London Docks, where the flags of every maritime Power are represented, you will often find Spanish and Portuguese vessels lying idle, because the crews are nominally doing honour to some saint of whose history they know nothing, and whose *cultus* exercises no practical influence over their lives. Protestantism is seen from this point of view to be naturally the religion of industrious and enterprising States, and to be at the bottom of much of the productiveness which has distinguished, for instance, Britain, Prussia, and America, in modern times. But there are two sides to everything, and the inquiry has often been made during this generation whether the people of Great Britain have holidays enough. Industry has assumed such enormous proportions in these days as to cast into the shadow everything else. When the multitudes of our great cities take their recreation, they take it with something like fierceness. Excursion-trains carry them by thousands. Their enjoyment is not in leisure, but in excitement. And they get about as little spiritual benefit out of the change as could well be conceived possible. It is natural that it should be asked whether more frequent holidays would not be a benefit, if only by teaching the populace to take their pleasure with a little more thoughtfulness and moderation?

Such speculations have doubtless been awakened in the minds of many readers here by the proceedings of the last day or two. The Scottish New Year's Day is certainly one of the least satisfactory holidays in the world. Its general aspect to a disinterested observer is that of a drunken Sunday. The closed shops give it the Sunday

dulness, while the drunkenness robs it of the Sunday gravity and decorum. There were several features of this last holiday which made it one of the most dismal on record. In the first place, we may refer to what our own report showed of the want of public spirit displayed by our Edinburgh shopkeepers. Because, for that one day, the bulk of them were to do no trade, they neglected to have the pavement cleaned, and filth was the natural accompaniment of the unexpected thaw. What with this, what with the weather, and what with the general ignorance how to make the most and best of a holiday, the whisky-drinking was above the usual level of that tide. The police were busy quite early on Monday afternoon; and it was impossible to stray through the popular thoroughfares for purposes of philosophical observation without meeting disgusting spectacles. There was nothing jovial or genial in the debauchery of which one saw traces at every dozen yards. A "Thracian" pugnacity, as Horace would have called it, was one element; and those who were not quarrelsome were dull and sulky. The drunkenness of boys, and even of women, was a further accompaniment of the mirth. Altogether the sight was a cheerless one,—that of the revelry, as it seemed, of an over-worked discontented population, obstinately bent on getting excitement of some kind, and yet conscious that it was only half-successful. The poor fellows looked as if they would have liked to get jolly, had they only known how, and as if they were cross with themselves and their neighbours, on account of the failure. The absence of gaiety would not have been so painful, if there had been anything imposing in the gravity of the scene. But a

heavy and gloomy recklessness of debauchery is the most depressing thing imaginable.

Whether, if Christmas Day were kept, as well as New Year's Day, by the Scotch, it would tend to improve the present state of things, is a question that may properly engage the attention of the more liberal and cultivated minds amongst us. That it is kept far more by the upper and middle class than it used to be, is generally known. The old Reformers objected to such festivals as "superstitious," but it is difficult to see what religious mischief they could do now; and anybody talking of them, in the sixteenth century style, as "abominations," would, in our age, be simply laughed at as a fanatical ass. It is certain that in England the celebration of Christmas is a practical benefit to the community of the highest importance. We say nothing of the religious aspects of the question. But we attach the greatest value to the effects of the day on the charity of the country. For a fortnight, almost, the *Times* has swarmed with acknowledgments of sums received by the different charitable institutions of London,—sums the giving of which was directly inspired by the associations of the season. Here, then, is a holiday with a meaning in it, and bearing fruits that even people who

"blaspheme custard through the nose,"

in their horror of such festivals, cannot dare to despise. And what is of great importance is just that Christmas is not a day only but a season,—the day itself throwing a certain festal glory over the days in its neighbourhood. With us, the first of January has to bear the whole brunt of the popular hilarity; and when it happens, from weather or other cause, to be a failure, great is the failure thereof.

The way it was kept this time was discreditable to our civilisation ; and ought to shut the mouths of those who fancy that some peculiar superiority belongs to everything that themselves have been accustomed to see and do since childhood. If we had more holidays, some of them better selected, and all of them directed more than they are by the spirit of our best and most genial society, the effect on the popular temper, manners, and morals, would be unquestionably beneficial.

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## LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, March 1862).

IT is not every day that we have before us a standard edition of an eighteenth century classic. But this is what Mr Moy Thomas has given to the world in the book to which we now,—though much later than we had intended,—desire to do some little justice. Of the accomplished editor, we must first speak. Mr Thomas is not only the author of some very thoughtful and graceful essays ; he is one of the best critical inquirers into the literary history of all that period covered by Lady Mary's life. He is sound on Pope and Swift ; great on Collins and Chatterton ; unrivalled on Richard Savage. We owe to his zeal the best monograph ever written on Savage's ill-starred career ; and he was the first person to clear up whatever can be known exactly of the scene and circum-

\* *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*. Edited by her Great-grandson, Lord Wharcliffe. Third Edition, with Additions, Corrections, etc., and a New Memoir, by W. Moy Thomas.



stances of Chatterton's early and awful death. In short, he ranks among the leading critics of the literary biography of those times. And few perhaps know what an amount of research, and how much keen sagacity is required by a writer of this stamp. Let anybody who would realise it amuse himself by investigating *the original authority* for any of those traditionary stories and anecdotes of a century ago, which most strike his fancy. He will find himself losing the scent after trying half a library ; drawn off to examine a will, or an old file of newspapers, and constantly liable to lose his labour unless he can instantly apply an acute decisive insight to the last fact turned up. He must have patience, judgment, tact, taste, as well as great information ; and his labours are infinitely important, because on the certainty of historic facts depends our judgment of historic characters. A single story about a famous man often determines the world's opinion of him, and it is only the critic of Mr Thomas's stamp who can tell us whether or not the story is a lie. We doubt if this kind of criticism is as much appreciated as it ought to be, though æsthetic criticism of very ordinary merit finds ready public acceptance.

Mr Thomas has this time applied his curious lore and his critical acumen to the remains of one of the most remarkable personages of the eighteenth century. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is a unique personage in English literature. No other Englishwoman has so much literary fame,—nor is associated with such great literary names,—nor has so various and many-sided a celebrity. One of our best letter-writers,—our earliest Oriental traveller,—Pope's friend and enemy,—the introducer of inoculation,—the cousin of Fielding,—she has very diverse claims to



the remembrance of posterity. And she mixes herself up specially with Scottish social history,—as the sister-in-law of the Jacobite Earl of Mar,—as the mother-in-law of the well-known Earl of Bute. But beyond all that, a certain romantic piquancy belongs to her name, such as few beautiful women who are famous and witty escape; and such as easily gathers round the memory of those who are oftener talked of than read. “Lady Mary” was becoming a mythical figure, in fact, to the popular eye, when the present editor took up his task. Lord Wharncliffe’s edition, somehow, never reached the general reading world, though well deserving to do so, if only for the admirable “Anecdotes” of Lady Louisa Stuart. People thought of Lady Mary, they hardly knew on what grounds, as one who had purchased her superiority to her sex at the price of the most precious and lovely attributes of the womanly character. Pope’s satire had much to do with the diffusion of this belief; and it is curious that his favourite way of libelling her was by libelling another woman of genius. His nicknaming her “Sappho,”—considering what he wished to be implied,—was itself a libel on the poetess of Lesbos. And when Mr Thomas shows how baseless Pope’s charges were, he is just doing for the brilliant Englishwoman what scholarship had previously done for the “Æolian girl.” The reader who only reads Lady Mary’s Letters in the old editions (in which some of them are spurious to begin with), and who takes her character on hearsay, is a believer in a legendary Lady Mary belonging to the world of myth. Mr Thomas’s criticism brings her out of tradition into history.

It may not be amiss to recapitulate the leading events

of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's life. As regards birth, she was a Pierrepont, the daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, Earl of Kingston by inheritance, and Duke of Kingston by creation, and was born in May 1689, the year after her great enemy Pope. Her blood was everywhere remarkable, for besides that the Pierreponts were ancient, they were distinguished, and while her mother was a Fielding, her grandmother was an Evelyn. Lord Kingston left his children very much to themselves, and his excellent library first stimulated and then cultivated his pretty daughter's studious taste. Lady Mary performed the remarkable feat of teaching herself Latin,—which would alone prove the solid character of her talent,—a point on which we shall have a word to say presently. And it was her talent as much as her good looks that first attracted Mr Wortley her husband to her. “He was a man of learning, a friend and associate of the most eminent literary men of his days”—says Mr Thomas. This gentleman,—a Whig, and a man of good business talents as a member of Parliament,—apparently agreed with Propertius, who says—

“*Me juvat in gremio doctæ legisse puellæ*”

—and assiduously courted the young lady in spite of Lord Kingston's opposition. Lord Kingston insisted on certain settlements which Mr Wortley declined to make; and the result was that the lovers eloped in the early autumn of 1712. This involved the sacrifice of Lady Mary's *dot*,—a sacrifice to principle and passion combined, for which she much admired her husband. But things went well for him. Queen Anne's death in 1714 brought in the Whigs. Wortley,—who was a Montagu in the male

line,—was at once made by his cousin Lord Halifax a Commissioner of the Treasury; and in 1716 was appointed Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. He and his wife left for Constantinople, by way of Vienna, and remained in the East till May 1718, when they returned to England by Genoa.

This tour and Eastern residence supplied Lady Mary with the subject of her best Letters; and till they appeared after her death, in 1763, the English public had never had anything like an accurate and yet brilliant account of Turkish life and society. Not only was the Porte in those days still a great and vigorous Power; there was a mysterious romantic halo about the East in the eyes of Western Europe, which has now all but disappeared. Lady Mary was the first modern writer to tell the truth about the Turks, to describe the splendid aspects of their life without fabulous detail, and to penetrate below the surface, and show the real character and influence of their social institutions. She anticipated "Eothen" in the vivacity of her descriptions; Mr Urquhart in the vindication or palliation of Eastern usages; Kinglake and Eliot Warburton in lively and piquant comparison between the Eastern and Western worlds. She was a literary ancestress of Byron moreover, who much admired her talents;—and so, in one way and another, she was the herald and forerunner of all our Oriental travellers down to Titmarsh (the "Fat Contributor") and Mr Albert Smith. We have now perhaps used up the poetic, and got to the depths of the cynical, view of the East; and the world, tired of repetitions of one or the other, may profitably recur to the clever

woman who anticipated both. But in introducing inoculation, she did a service to mankind, such as no mere lively sketcher will ever do. We have almost forgotten, now, what smallpox was in those days, when it was hardly less terrible than leprosy had been in the Middle Ages. It emptied nurseries like the plague. It killed or blinded the finest of the youth of the time; and it fell upon the roses of the loveliest cheeks of Europe with a power as blasting and mysterious as that which has in our own age ravaged the vines of the South. Lady Mary had had the smallpox, and had made a wonderful recovery from it, though not without some damage to her good looks. But it had carried off her only brother; and was thus a doubly terrible subject of remembrance to her. She took up the subject of inoculation at Constantinople, and pursued it in England, with a zeal that may justly be called pious. At Constantinople she inoculated or "ingrafted" her son Edward Wortley. It must be admitted that *he* was unworthy the trouble of the experiment. For he turned out one of the greatest scamps of his generation; and was a thorn in the side of his celebrated, but certainly not happy, mother, as long as he lived. Hundreds of better people than himself, however, benefited by the experiment ("*in corpore vili*," we may truly say!) which had been made upon him. Inoculation spread, in spite of much opposition, in England; and prepared the way for the greater discovery of vaccination in due time. We have said that Lady Mary was a literary ancestress of Lord Byron. She was, also, a scientific ancestress of Dr Jenner. To her myrtle-crown of beauty, and her laurel-crown of wit, we must add

the oaken-leaved crown,—the *corona civica*,—due to those who have saved fellow-creatures' lives. And, certainly, the smallpox was not less deadly to our ancestors than even their incessant wars.

The period which followed Lady Mary's return from Constantinople, and which intervened between that and the long exile of her later life, is chiefly known as the period of her quarrel with Pope. Famous writers quarrel now. But they don't now lampoon each other, publicly, any more than they fight duels; contenting themselves with abuse of each other in private, in the smoking-rooms of clubs! 'Twas different with the war-like generation of the age of Anne. When A quarrelled with B, it was precisely as if his Sovereign had quarrelled with the King of France. He withdrew his ambassador. He issued a declaration of war. And he marched on the enemy's territory with flags flying, in the face of the world. Pope's war with Lady Mary was as much a matter of notoriety as the war of the Spanish Succession. But nobody can yet say with certainty about what it began. They had once been friends, as Pope and Addison had once been friends. During Lady Mary's absence in the East, Pope had written letters to her, laboured and artificial as all his letters are, and full of the conventional gallantry expressed with broad license of allusion, which was characteristic of the time. She had replied in her capacity of a woman of wit,—freely and vigorously,—but not with any more personal warmth towards Pope than was due to the nature of the correspondence with a man of so much mark. "The fashion" of writing in this style was "a French importation"—says Mr Thomas, very well,



—"which the hostile tariffs of the Whigs were unfortunately unable to prevent." Whether Pope ever presumed beyond the conventional mark, and got snubbed and laughed at by Lady Mary, is uncertain, though it is not improbable. There was a tradition among her descendants to this effect, as we see in the "Anecdotes" of her granddaughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, and Mr Thackeray evidently inclines to accept it. Pope seems to have been willing that the world should believe something of the kind, for, in speaking of himself, he says—

"Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,  
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit,"

—as if "Sappho" had hurt his feelings in some matter about which they were tender. However, neither Croker, nor Thackeray, neither Mr Carruthers, Mr Peter Cunningham, nor our present editor, can tell us with any certainty what the first cause, or the earliest date, of this famous quarrel was. We shall give a specimen of Mr Thomas's "Memoir," by extracting part of what he says on the subject, as at least suggesting

#### ONE PROBABLE CAUSE OF THE QUARREL.

"Another account, given at second-hand by Spence from the Countess of Pomfret, who professes to have had it from Lady Mary, is, that 'when she became acquainted with the Duke of Wharton, Mr Pope grew jealous; and that occasioned the breach between them.' This could, of course, be only a surmise. It may have been one of the causes to which Lady Mary assigned his ill-will, and the statement is therefore not inconsistent with the spirit of her accounts at other times. The allusions to the Duke of Wharton in Lady Mary's correspondence occur only in letters written during the years 1724 and



1725, which appears to have been the only period of their intimacy. This was after her estrangement from Pope; but the witty and profligate young Duke attacked Pope in a satire, of which he gave Lady Mary a copy, and of which he was far too imprudent to conceal the authorship. This may account for Pope's elaborate satire upon him under the name of Clodio; for the Duke, in the last years of his life, was an ardent supporter of the Tory and Jacobite party, to which Pope belonged:—

‘Clodio, the scorn and wonder of our days,  
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise;  
Born with whate’er could win it from the wise,  
Women and fools must like him, or he dies.”

“But it was, I suspect, at this exact point of time that a ground of offence arose, which Pope would be little likely to acknowledge, but which was far more calculated to wound his pride and turn what was before a mere coolness into bitter animosity. The preface of Mary Astell, affixed to the copy of the letters writtenduring the embassy, bears date December 18, 1724; the second preface, May 31, 1725; and the last letter in that compilation is addressed to Pope, and contains, besides more prosaic banter, her clever parody upon his well-known epitaph on the Lovers struck by Lightning. It has been already shown, by an ample test, that, except in a few doubtful instances, the letters in these volumes did not consist of any real correspondence, but were, in fact, subsequent compilations; and there are strong reasons for believing that the letter to Pope referred to was no more genuine than any of the others. It will not escape the reader's observation that its contents, both in verse and prose, are more ingenious and elaborate than they were likely to have been if really written in an inn at Dover, after a sea-passage in November, and in answer to a letter ‘this minute received.’ If, indeed, the report in the newspapers were correct, none of the letters which close the pretended correspondence could have been

written at the dates which they bear in Lady Mary's handwriting; for the *Weekly Journal* of the 11th of October 1718 announces that 'on Thursday sevensnight last the Honourable Wortley Montagu, Esq., late Ambassador at the Ottoman Court, and his lady, arrived in town;' and it is very improbable that this particular letter could have been written on the 1st of November; for the letter of Pope 'this minute received' 'from Paris,' to which it professes to be an answer, is dated September 1,' and was evidently written after news had reached England of her arrival at Genoa. The letter is, indeed, one which, if written at the date affixed, would probably have served to abate those raptures with which the poet continued to address her. But if it would have been offensive to write it at the moment, to fabricate it afterwards, and to insert it in the copy of the collection which Lady Louisa Stuart informs us was circulated among her friends, was an offence still more unpardonable. The piquancy of the poem could not have failed to attract attention, or the whole matter to come quickly to the ears of Pope. His letter containing the story of the Lovers struck by Lightning, with his epitaph upon them, was a composition which he appears to have regarded with a peculiar pride, for he addressed copies of it only slightly varied to several of his friends. He was, therefore, little likely to relish the ridicule cast upon his somewhat exaggerated sentiment, or the amusement which the friends of Lady Mary derived from the spectacle of his supposed humiliation. Pope revelled in the vulgar attacks made upon him by small critics and poor poets, and dexterously turned them to the advantage of his own renown. But to be beaten by a woman with his own weapons, and with no more expenditure of labour or pains than might be bestowed in a chance minute snatched during a journey at an inn; to be represented as laughed out of countenance, and out of all his fine sentimentalism and artificial moralisings, in the presence of an audience who enjoyed his discomfiture, was an offence which Pope's sensitive and spiteful nature could not easily forgive. It was with Lady Mary too common a practice

to exercise her wit at the expense of friends, and to be afterwards surprised at their resentment, for us to wonder at the simplicity with which, if these suppositions be correct, she induced persons to inquire what was the cause of his ill-will. Pope would naturally avoid the confession that her satire had wounded him; but the offence appears to reveal itself in his allusions to her as 'that dangerous thing, a female wit,' as one who had 'too much wit' for him; and particularly in his note to the 'Dunciad,' declaring that the offensive passage which had been supposed to refer to Lady Mary, was intended to apply to all 'bragging travellers.' Of the existence of his ill-feeling she had soon convincing proof. The 'Capon's Tale,' written by Pope or Swift, or both, and published in their Miscellany, appears to have been the first attack. Then followed the allusion to 'Lady Marys' in the 'Dunciad,' 1728, which was at once fixed upon her by Curll, and to which Pope subsequently appended an insulting note. Pope accused her of retaliating in a 'A Pop upon Pope,' and appears to have suspected her of having had a hand in a libel called 'One Epistle to Mr A. Pope,' published in 1730; which explains the appearance of a still more savage attack in his 'Imitation of the first Satire of the Second Book of Horace,' under the name of Sappho. Pope, indeed, denied that the satire referred to her; but his readers so applied it, which served his purpose; and there can now be little doubt of the insincerity of his denial. After this, attacks, or what were understood by the public as attacks, both upon herself and her husband, were frequent; and the popularity of Pope's Satires at length rendered her so conspicuous, that she may well have become disgusted with that scene from which she soon afterwards finally retired."

Whatever the reason of Pope's hatred to Lady Mary, we cannot approve the form which most of his satire took. The lady was satirical enough in tendency, herself. She

was one of the authors of a satire where Pope is told that his versification is—

“ Hard as thy heart and as thy birth obscure.”

The Diary she left behind her, and which her daughter Lady Bute burned, seems to have been sufficiently seasoned with scandal and sarcasm. But, though she would have scorned the plea of unfitness for satirical warfare on the ground of sex,—though she was as ready for battle and rapid in it as the Virgilian Camilla,—that does not justify Pope’s assailing her in libels which were absolute lies. Mr Moy Thomas shows pretty clearly, that when Pope inquired—

“ Who starved a sister, or denied a debt ? ”

—he was cramming a couple of falsehoods into a single line. But, supposing it to be pleaded for him, that he believed these accusations true,—no such excuse can be made for his conduct in another matter handled in Mr Thomas’s Memoir. It is now, we fear, only too certain, not only that Pope contrived a trick to get his Letters published,—which has long been known,—but that he *cooked* the Letters (as they say in Parliament) before publication. When the long-expected Crokerian edition appears, the world will hear enough about this, the *Athenæum*, it is well known, having illustrative MS. matter in reserve. Meanwhile, let us see what Mr Thomas says about Pope’s treatment of his Letters to Lady Mary. “ It becomes significant,” observes he, “ that *on collation with the originals*, it appears that in preparing them for publication he omitted passages, interpolated passages, and

made other alterations, *with the manifest object of heightening the appearance of familiarity between them.*" Instances of this manipulation,—and it is a species of forgery,—are to be found in Mr Thomas's Notes ; and are more injurious to Pope's memory, than all his lampoons on Lady Mary are injurious to hers.

But enough of this painful subject. We have mentioned before, that Lady Mary passed the last twenty years of her life abroad. They were passed in Italy, and away from her husband, though the separation seems to have been unaccompanied with hostile feeling on either side. She returned to England in January 1762, and died in the August following, in London, in her seventy-fourth year.

Those who love our eighteenth century literature, without overvaluing it, or being blind to its faults, will always turn to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's writings as among its best and most characteristic productions. She was no mere "wit" to begin with, no epigrammatist with fine eyes only, like some of those French women of whom our neighbours in Paris are so proud. She had, indeed, plenty of wit, but it was of that good English kind, which—to borrow an illustration from the vinous art—has a "body" of sense in it ; and which reminds one of her cousin Fielding's. Shrewdness and sagacity of substantial quality form the base of her intellectual character ; and her gaiety and brilliance are never to be separated from the real power which belongs to her. People think of her wit, without remembering her sense, as they think of her beauty, without remembering that she was a good housewife and a good mother. To form a full conception of her, it is necessary to bear in mind that she was a solid



student, and well-read woman, and that she introduced into England a medical discovery of the first importance; as also, that in spite of her beauty and daring, her love of wit and proud self-confidence, no charge of her enemies against her character in essential points has been fairly substantiated. This is much to say in an age when research is enabling us to know the contemporaries of Lady Mary better than they knew each other, and is bringing to light things which they hoped would be buried with them in their graves. Among her contemporaries as they stand in the eyes of posterity, Lady Mary will always hold a high place. Her Letters are some of the best in the language, less airy and subtly epigrammatic than those of Walpole, and somewhat inferior in style to Chesterfield's, but equally valuable in their way. The higher literature of our age has more spirituality and sentiment than that of the eighteenth century. Our lighter literature, too, is free from some of the grosser faults of its predecessor at that time. But for sense and clearness, and outspoken decisiveness about life, for a mastery of the whole "common sense" view of existence and society, and for a genuine love of literature both as an art and a tradition, we shall never surpass the people among whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu lived, and of whom she was justly one of the most distinguished.

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#### A HINT TO QUACK.

OF Scotia's learning, Quack is in despair.

Would you serve learning, Quack? Resign your Chair.



## A RADICAL ROMANCE.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, January 1861).

THERE happens every now and then, among our countrymen, some social incident just important enough, in its general bearings, to be discussed in the leading columns of newspapers, yet light enough to give an amusing variety to them. Of such a nature is the "Sylphide scandal," about which we have all heard at intervals during the last month or two, and which—after sailing like a bubble during that period,—has finally burst,—to the disappointment, as we suspect, of many of our contemporaries. The story went,—and it was a newspaper correspondent who set it going,—that the Marquis of Downshire, returning on board his yacht, suddenly, at Naples, found the captain making love in a romantic attitude to his daughter; that, thereupon, the incensed patrician ("a man of gigantic strength") hurled the presumptuous lover into the sea, which closed for ever on him and his passion. It is not often that the British public gets hold of anything as good as *this*,—or half so calculated to excite intense interest in an age at once fond of romances and Radicalism. The fierce poetry of the incident was indubitable, as every novel-reader felt with a thrill. Here was an oligarch,—proud as Lucifer and cold as ice,—a stern haughty man, unacquainted with the nobler impulses of our nature,—but whose daughter (a true Zuleika of the best Byronic type) had seen the noble character of the romantic young sailor who sailed their yacht, and too tenderly betrayed her secret heart

to him ! And, now, when this golden-haired child of the sea had at last flung himself on his knees to pour out his hidden tenderness,—what had been his doom?—death—and the wave ! The circumstances were plain at a glance, and Naples was a delightful bit of scenery as a background. But while the gentle sighed over the business, different emotions possessed the bosoms of Podger of the *Weekly Whoop*, and others of the same kidney. They sharpened their pens, and waited for the telegram that was to announce the marquis's arrest. The aristocracy had done it at last ; a marquis had committed a fearful crime ; and his death on the gallows (the block being reserved for political offences) would strike terror to the hearts of an overbearing order.

There was only one fault, it seems, in this “thrilling” narrative. It was a lie. And, the explanation turned out to be such a stupid, unromantic one, after all. Not only had Lord Downshire never drowned the gentleman who sailed his yacht for him, but the gentleman himself was a staid old naval captain, much respected in “the service,” as his wife very properly told the world through the *Times*. While Podger had been brewing his thunder, and a hundred Lauras and Matildas dreaming of the youth now

“—— tossed with tangle and with shells,”

as Mr Tennyson says,—Lord Downshire and Captain Grandy had been on a quiet cruise, “luffing” and “jib-ing” without a suspicion of either the hangman or the penny-a-liner being so deeply interested in their respective fates. So, now, the explanation has come ; and Lord Downshire seems, from his letters on the subject, to be furious.

It would be more natural in an Irish gentleman,—and there are no pleasanter fellows when of the right sort,—to laugh at the whole business, which reminds one of the stories of Lever and Maxwell. The fools in the matter were the scribbling *gobemouches* who first believed and repeated the tale, and the portion of the public which shut its eyes, and opened its mouth, to take it in. There is no doubt that this “London Correspondence” of the papers, is in many respects a nuisance. Journals of a good class, in communication with London men of letters of a good class too, are careful what is written for them in that way, and by whom. But this care is not universal; and in many papers, of course, such Correspondence is merely a case of Town Mouse and Country Mouse,—the *ridiculus mus* in each case being a small nibbling animal. When this is so, the Correspondent,—having no access to substantial persons in the various London worlds of which the country world wishes to hear,—repeats at third-hand all the loose gossip and scandal that rests on nobody’s authority in particular. Like the prison called Dionysius’s Ear, near Syracuse, *his* long ear repeats, in a thousand-fold magnified reverberation, whatever noise reaches it. He is especially fond of personality, and of all that properly belongs to the private social life. But to such a man, a story about “a marquis” is irresistible, because there he gratifies, at once,—(and they often go together),—the curiosity of a flunkey, and the malignity of a leveller.

There is a certain interest in the question why scandal about the aristocracy,—which is by no means an unpopular body on the whole,—should so readily find a circulation and a kind of acceptance. Every man of the world meets

stories floating as he goes along concerning people of rank, the falsity of which is evident on the face of them. We are inclined to think that they spring from ignorance and prurience, rather than democratic malignity,—though this, on occasion, makes a base *use* of them. People lie about lords and ladies as they do about actors and actresses,—not because these are theatrical, or those noble,—but because both are public in their different ways. To gossip about a Mr Tomkins excites no interest in a mixed audience, because nobody knows who he is. But a title is an advertisement,—just as a reputation is. All persons of mark are in the same boat. Coleridge was once in a hotel where a gentleman told him, as a piece of news, that “the poet Coleridge had hanged himself—which,” he added, “is an odd incident.” “But the oddest thing, sir”—replied the author of “Christabel”—“is that after doing so, he should be here talking to you.” We dare say there must be more than one of the British Peerage who has learned equally strange facts about himself; and we do not wonder that some of them are known to be glad to get back to that metropolis which makes everybody obscure,—out of the range of the hundred telescopes turned upon their castles in their own counties.

A gossip with a turn for speculation often bases a whole theory about the morals and conduct of what Cockneys call the h’order, upon the bits of scandal which he hears, in going through life, about them. He forgets what a small proportion it is of the class that ever comes before the world, even in that way, and how little difference in the great leading points of human nature, it makes to a lord to have had from his cradle the distinctions which

seem so wonderful to *him*. The Divorce Court has, to be sure, abated one form of *scandalum magnatum*, by revealing that model of virtue the British middle-classman, in a light in which his admirers do not love to contemplate him. But there still remains too much of a peculiar mixture of envy and credulity about the public, which makes flying falsehoods stick to them, like flies to a "catch-'em-alive-O." This should be rubbed off by degrees,—and the natural good sense of John Bull, and his kindly feeling towards his betters, be kept clean (to follow up the metaphor), and in good order. For our part, when we next hear in a railway carriage, that the *Manx Cat* has a "lively" London Correspondent, or that Lady Wilhelmina Skeggs is no better than she ought to be, we shall compose our countenance into one of grave democratic severity and morality, and tell the story of the marquis who drowned the "Jolly Young Waterman" in the Bay of Naples.

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## ON SERMONS.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, August 1862).

At this particular time of the year, subjects not at all political come in for an attention which is not bestowed on them in busier periods. We are not, therefore, surprised that some of our contemporaries should have been



lately discussing the question of sermons. It is one that comes before the world, now-a-days, at intervals, and for the most part is introduced in the language of complaint. People justly interested in all that concerns religion, and by no means unfriendly to the clerical class, are yet often heard to speak with a certain impatience of the present condition of the British pulpit. They say that our preaching is falling off,—that it is duller, and therefore less effective than it used to be ; that it is too conventional both in substance and delivery ; and that the brains invested in its cultivation bear no proportion to those engaged in other intellectual pursuits. And they ask whether this is a necessary and irremediable result of historical changes ; or whether an improvement may not be looked for, when the clergy (by which they here mean the clergy of British churches generally) realise the full force of the complaint, and set about improving in the department complained of ?

That sermons no longer hold the place they did in our literature, is, we think, too obvious for anybody to deny ; and this fact is a striking corroboration of the general view of those whose opinions we have just quoted. Formerly, the sermons of illustrious British divines took their place on the library shelf alongside the great works of art of their best contemporaries. In a poetical age, we had poetical sermons ; in a witty age, witty sermons ; in a philosophical age, philosophical sermons. Jeremy Taylor was a worthy contemporary of Milton ; and South of Dryden ; while Butler's "Sermons on Human Nature" are well known landmarks in the history of the philosophy of the country. This parity of literary rank may be claimed for some preachers, 'as late as Horsley or Paley. But though, of



course, we have still sometimes what may fairly be called a good volume of sermons, will anybody pretend that, as a branch of literature, this branch holds its relative rank to-day? The contrary is notorious;—and yet this is the fairest possible test. The press is as open to a preacher as to anybody else, and for him, as for everybody who publishes, the audience is larger than it ever was. If sermons, then, as a general rule, do not acquire literary *status* (and we are not speaking of the trashy ones which sell *without* acquiring it), the reason can only be that fewer sermons deserving that rank are delivered. If they were delivered, they would be published; and not seeing them, we have a right to conclude that they don't exist. *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.*

No doubt, this obscuration of the literature of the pulpit is partly the result of the immense increase of every other kind of literature. No doubt, also, it is compatible with a great deal of useful influence being exerted by the pulpit, notwithstanding; especially in the case of congregations little acquainted with the higher literature of the age. But these are poor consolations, or rather, they are not properly consolations at all. To dwell upon them, would be to encourage a low level of preaching, and this, in time, would alienate the feeling of the educated classes from the churches, even though, from a wish to set a good example, they should continue going there. In these matters, however, different classes cannot be viewed as altogether apart. The mere mob-preacher has his mob, no doubt, and *they* just suit each other. But in the case of the great bulk of respectable uneducated or less educated people, half their respect for the preacher depends on their belief

that he is worthy to address their betters. And, what is more, they are most effectually addressed by a preacher from that point of view. If he is always stooping to some imaginary level before his mind, he is more likely to lower himself, than to raise his audience.

We must, then, have superior preaching,—and it can only come from superior thinking, and study. Whatever increases the general culture of the clergy, increases their effectiveness in the pulpit. Thus, what was the strength of Robertson, of Brighton, whom the *Blackwood* writer on Sermons very fairly quotes as an example that truly effective preaching is still possible? His talent, no doubt, was an indispensable element; but not less so was his knowledge of what are the real thoughts and doubts agitating the souls of this generation. He was *en rapport* with the most sensitive student of the latest mystic or sceptic; and could always prove his right to convert such a one by proving that he understood and sympathised with him. The preacher more than any man ought to know the age, and its place in the history of former ages. Not,—as is well observed in the *Saturday Review*,—that he should preach on the times in the narrowest sense,—that he should give his version of the kind of reflections that people expect in newspapers. His task is a higher one. He has to appeal to the inner feeling,—to the speculative deeps,—in man; and the age to *him* is a new phase of the eternal spiritual history of the race, which can only be fully understood through its culture. While this is indispensable, then, even to the moral part of a preacher's duty, it is not the less valuable as an aid to him in the intellectual part of it. One of the most powerful resources,

for instance, of the pulpit orator will always be the history of Christianity,—especially of its first moral victories in the ancient world. And these can only be brought home to the popular understanding by men profoundly and familiarly acquainted with that world's social and domestic condition. It is here that classical learning becomes of so much importance, as transfiguring what to most people are mere geographical terms and proper names into living and glowing realities.

But though such accomplishments as we have thus glanced at are absolutely necessary to a high-class preacher, there are other points on which it is of supreme importance to insist. Many observers who are content with a sufficiently modest intellectual standard in sermons, complain of their merely traditional and conventional tone otherwise. They say that even the voice and delivery of great part of the bulk of the clergy is unnatural, unreal, and unlike any other kind of oratory intended to produce emotion or conviction in the hearer. In short, they say, that there is a conventional type of preaching in the ascendant, just now, which fails for all the higher purposes of exhortation; and that many of our pastors leave behind them, in entering the pulpit, all the simplicity, directness, and fresh human reality of ordinary speech. Remarks of this kind are so frequent that it is not likely they have no truth to rest upon; and they ought to meet with serious consideration in the proper quarter. They do not by any means apply to Scotland alone; but they have an additional significance in Scotland, from the fact that so much depends here on the preacher and his preaching. A stranger seeing so much stress laid on

“trial sermons” and so forth, amongst us, would be apt to expect that we bore away the palm in sacred oratory, much as the Italians do in music. But it is to be feared that this is not the case, and that the constant reference to a merely popular standard of taste in the matter has been one of the depressing influences. The decline complained of, however, belongs to no ecclesiastical system in particular, and is therefore evidently the result of general causes which deserve investigation. In all such instances, the first thing necessary is that the phenomenon should be clearly and temperately described, and fairly looked in the face.



## LORD EGLINTON.

*(Edinburgh Courant, October 1861).*

ON Friday\* was laid in his family vault at Kilwinning the most popular patrician of his time. It is no exaggeration to apply this description to the thirteenth Earl of Eglington, and it embodies at once what was most characteristic of him, and what he would most have wished to be remembered for, himself. Other men of his order were as much respected, and some were abler, more learned, or higher in the State. But no noble of the three kingdoms was so widely and generally loved. This is a kind of fame which excites less emulation than some kinds, but which is rarer and higher, and more consolatory to those who have to lament his life suddenly broken, and his too early grave.

\* October 11, 1861.

History and nature combined to make Lord Eglinton a thorough gentleman. His career cannot be separated from his ancestry, because his ancestry both consciously and unconsciously inspired and created it. As heir-male of the House of Seton and heir-general of the House of Montgomerie,—the descendant of some of the bravest among men and the fairest among women,—he drew from roots that lay deep in the past the qualities of character which bloomed into such engaging flower. Representing through his pedigree the best of the Norman colonists who did so much not only for the civilisation but for the independence of Scotland, it was natural in him to be at once a friend of improvement and a lover of nationality. If there was no better landlord and no truer Scotsman, this was not by accident, but because these were the characters belonging to his blood. There met to form Lord Eglinton something of what was best in the different lines which centred in him,—the earnestness of old “Greysteel” the Marston-Moor man,—the chivalry of the ballad-hero of Otterburn,—with the strong local feeling, and honest, if mistaken, instincts of a recent ancestor who talked of the “misery and slavery of being united to England!” These qualities were, however, so harmoniously proportioned that the sentiment never ran away with the good sense, nor the generosity with the prudence of his character. He shone on the turf without impairing his refinement, and kept up his hereditary splendour without damaging his estate. So beautiful and well-balanced was his nature that he created all the effects of a man of genius without possessing extraordinary powers; and is now deplored wherever he was known as if he had taken part in the greatest transactions



of the day. His popularity, like that of Sir Philip Sydney, depended less on what he achieved than on what he was ; and sprang from a general admiration of his whole bearing and conduct similar to that excited by the unconscious goodness of a child or beauty of a woman.

A mere narrative therefore of the external events of Lord Eglinton's life very insufficiently explains the emotion which his death has created, and which can only be understood by remembering the personal goodness of every day of his existence. Our readers hardly need to be reminded that he was born at Palermo in Sicily (where his father was temporarily discharging diplomatic duties) on the 29th September 1812, and that he succeeded his grandfather as thirteenth Earl on the 14th December 1819. Though he was for some time at Eton, his intellectual culture as a boy, we believe, was not made such a paramount matter as in many cases, which perhaps explains the freshness which he brought in later years to intellectual pursuits. He was first made famous by the Tournament of 1839,—a splendid poetic extravagance, easily traceable to the influence of Sir Walter Scott and that school of literature, on a youth of large fortune, whose ancestors had tilted before half the Courts of Europe. A less selfish sacrifice of money in the way of amusement could hardly have been devised ; and this was the character of Lord Eglinton's amusements through life. His pleasures like his business occupations were such as benefited others, for they were eminently sociable ;—they were also eminently healthy and manly, and becoming a man who loved the traditions of the country-life of the English and Scottish nobles.

Lord Eglinton's Conservatism in politics was of a piece



with everything else about him. It was based on sentiment, fortified by common sense, and tempered—while adorned—by geniality. He wished to see our institutions preserved, but he wished them to be so administered that the people should love them. He may be excused for “standing by his order,” because he meant his order to be like himself. Following up these ideas, he became a member of Lord Derby’s first Government in 1852, and again in 1858 ; each time discharging the high and difficult office of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland with a care that satisfied every intellect, and a kindness that touched every heart, in the island. It was characteristic of Lord Eglinton, that while his mere talent was never the most prominent thing about him, he always rose rather above expectation when the occasion came. His speech at the Burns’ Festival in Ayrshire was perfectly admirable, and may be read with pleasure, even now, when a herd of inferior animals have trodden over and over the ground. The essence of his oratory then and always was a union of plain good sense with a frank and pleasant liveliness. He was never dull, and never extravagant,—blending in his speeches, as in his manners, the gravity with the suavity of a gentleman.

Public men of all grades will do well to consider how Archibald William Montgomerie, Lord Eglinton, never professing “popular” politics, came to live and die perhaps the most generally liked man of his time. To us it seems that several lessons may be derived from the fact. In the first place, we can hardly help seeing how little a thing mere cleverness is, compared with that nobleness of nature which marks out the man to be loved and trusted. There is no doubt that the diffusion of cheap education is

likely to give us "clever" politicians enough. But fine characters are formed at least as much by tradition as by schools, and the tendency is so much to despise tradition, that we feel it our duty on every opportunity to point out good examples of its results. If any nobleman ever acted on the maxim of *Noblesse oblige* it was Lord Eglinton; and that he did this from traditional inspiration his whole conduct showed. Our aristocracy have nothing to gain by deserting this—their proper—field, and attempting to rival the pushing men of other classes in agitations and discussions for which these are much better fitted. Let them be statesmen if they will; but, above all, let them live down calumny by acting up to their own proper ideal, and this will do them more good than truckling to opinion, and imitating aggressive innovation. Lord Eglinton would not have been a bit more popular if he had delighted to lay his escutcheon in the dirt for the world to walk over. His high bearing was indeed one element in creating the regard which he inspired—for it harmonised with his position, and gave grace and dignity to his natural kindness. This would be ill exchanged for the sort of thing one sees coming out of newer schools of opinion and manners,—schools the ugly incidents of whose domination would be most felt by the helpless classes of the community.

We must not, however, imitate the old custom of fighting out our feud-fights at a funeral; especially at that of a man who loved his countrymen of every party, and did his duty in kindness to them all. Our intention was only to point out the essential characteristics of one whose memory will be long cherished in the land to which he

belonged, and with peculiar pride by the party of which he was the great ornament on this side of the Border. To describe is to praise him; and the chief consolation his admirers will feel is, that the very suddenness of his death is likely to stamp deep on the world's memory the impression of his example.

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### MR EDGAR'S HISTORIES FOR YOUTH.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, September 1862).

MR EDGAR has won for himself the position of being the best master in our day of a very important—while difficult, and also peculiar—kind of literature. He writes the best Histories for the Young of any man of his time. Now, this is a task, the right discharge of which is a matter of much consequence to every one of us who has youngsters; and which can only be performed by a writer in whom several uncommon qualifications meet. To write for children is difficult enough; but Mr Edgar writes for an age, the literary needs of which are still harder to satisfy than those of children. He writes for the lad who is just beginning to read English books *for pleasure*, and who is busy in his school hours with Cæsar or Virgil. What sort of English books such a lad falls in with, is a matter that may affect his tastes,—and through his tastes his principles,—for life. His imagination is beginning to

\* *Cavaliers and Roundheads.* By John G. Edgar.

*Memorable Events of Modern History.* By John G. Edgar.

awaken,—his affections are strong and easily moved in any direction,—and what he now reads with genuine gusto has an influence keener perhaps than any exercised on him by books in after years. Fiction now commences to kindle him; but it is most important to remember that Fiction chiefly enthrals boys as an image of Reality, and that if Reality be made attractive, it will carry the day even against Fiction itself. We are great friends of good novels and romances, and have a hearty contempt for the blockheads who preach up what they call “Useful Knowledge” to the exclusion of other studies. But suppose you can combine the kind of interest that Truth gives, with the kind of interest Fiction gives? This is the great *desideratum* for a boy's book,—and it is the skill shown by Scott in supplying it, which makes his “Tales of a Grandfather” such a charming and valuable work. The *heart* in it appeals to boy and man alike, while the exquisitely managed narrative carries the young reader along, and perhaps first shows to him that learning may be a pleasure. Such a book demands not skill only in the author, but a happy buoyant youthful temperament,—which meets the wants of fresh intelligences by being fresh and gay itself. Probably, those who look on Mr Dickens's geniality as being real and inexhaustible, expected great things from his “Child's History of England.” And, according to their theory, they were right. Yet, the “Child's History of England” is a miserable failure,—as complete a failure as a very clever man ever made. It is dry, hard, and unreadable, to begin with. But it has worse faults than dryness and unreadableness. It is written on a theory

altogether absurd as the basis for such a book,—the theory that past times are to be represented to children, as times out of which we may be glad to have escaped. The Druids cannot be sketched even, without an introduction of the ghastly old eighteenth century notion that they were conscious impostors,—and without some shabby innuendoes against supposed “Druids” deluding the world now. Again, when James the Sixth comes on the stage, the contemporary flatteries of him are denounced, without any explanation of how such flatteries came to be matters of course, or any allowance for the real goodness of the men who are censured for them. All this kind of thing is mischievous in a Child’s History. The young should have the best aspects of their country’s Past put before them, should have whatever was noble and beautiful in it vividly portrayed, that their patriotism may be early rooted, and their more generous feelings—admiration, emulation, love, pity—early roused. This need involve no falsehood, nor any suppression of the crimes and failings of historical personages. But complicated problems should be avoided; and everything like satire, or contemporary application of the old stories, left for after years. The doubts and sorrows,—the controversy and cynicism,—of life, will begin early enough; for it is the misfortune of our time,—and not its glory, as some people seem to think,—that we do not grow up (as our ancestors did) with a faith in the institutions of our country, as real, natural, and trusting, as that which we have for our fathers and mothers. And suppose these institutions have a bad side,—well, then, at least, let our youngsters hear the good one first; and the good side is



evident in every page of any history that is at once generous and profound.

Nothing is more striking in Mr Edgar's books than the fairness with which the Past is allowed to speak for itself. He does not disguise, indeed, that he admires old times, and old heroes, and old families ; but he takes no improper advantage of his position as a historian, to insinuate an *undue* admiration of these into the youthful intellect. He does not take *a side* in telling his story, because he knows that there is an element of good in both sides, and that *this* is the element which is of supreme value to the young. He draws moral and poetic honey from the rose, without too much caring whether it is a White Rose or a Red one. This is particularly seen in one of his latest works,—(one of the two just published, the names of which are given below),—his “Cavaliers and Roundheads.” The temptation was strong, here, to go in heart and soul for the King. The King's cause had its own share of the truth which Cavaliers and Roundheads represented between them. The Parliament—as the honest Hallam well shows—committed many a grave fault ; and those who maintain that a Revolution was necessary, will not deny that a Monarchy was necessary too. Then, the loyal party is the picturesque party,—the party of those who love tradition, and revelry, and song ; and it requires a discrimination beyond the common to see the poetry in a Puritan, or the vulgar selfishness that tainted some of the Cavaliers. But Mr Edgar has this kind of discrimination. He does not identify Conservatism with Jacobitism, like some writers who can only see the *operatic* element in history, and who treat Buchanan with disrespect because Mary had fine



eyes. He is aristocratic in his opinions, not from snobbish but from feudal sympathies. He knows that the ascendancy of a system like Laud's would have been risen against in an earlier century by Beauchamps and Nevilles, and that the first movers against Charles were gentlemen, who moved against him from a gentleman's point of view. A sham-aristocratic upstart of our time calling Cromwell "a brewer" is to Mr Edgar—(whose historical ideas are permeated by genealogy)—a fellow fit only for "the second table." He is thus able to do impartial justice even to Revolutionists, because he accurately understands how much they differed from the Revolutionists of to-day. And thus, if his affections on the whole draw him to the King's banner, they are duly balanced by his sense and knowledge, while his very "prejudices" (if we must use the word) neutralise each other. Thus, the fact that neither Lord Derby in England nor our own Scottish Montrose got fair play from the Royalists, prevents him from being too much influenced by the fact that these great nobles deliberately chose the Royal side. The result of all these "checks and balances" of sentiment is that Mr Edgar's own clear judgment and generous heart get fair play; and that he writes of the struggle between Cavalier and Roundhead, with a complete sympathy for neither, but with a hearty respect for both. This was Coleridge's point of view. It was also the point of view of De Quincey; and apparently—(what is more curious, and not less instructive)—of the Duke of Wellington, whose vigorous intellect took a natural interest in the contests of those robust, manly, and high-aspiring times.

Such, then, being the character of Mr Edgar's histories—

(and what we have said of his "Cavaliers and Roundheads" is equally true of other works of his,—for instance, the excellent one on the "Wars of the Roses"),—we have next to remark on their style. It is no exaggeration to say that he writes one of the best styles of the time,—and this is the more gratifying because he is a Scot, and *style* just now is one of our weak points in Scotland. We don't quite know why this should be so, but it is. Robertson, it is true, was cumbrous and pompous; but Hume and Adam Smith—each in his own way—wrote charming English. Nothing can be better than Hume's flowing grace, and Smith's easy good sense and *bonhomie*; while now-a-days, our Scottish *literati* are often prolix, verbose, and ponderous,—which some of them try to relieve by streaks of sentimentalism, pietism, and a curious affectation of *naïveté*;—

"Affecting to be unaffected,"

as Congreve says,—and disgusting one, like the coquetteries of an old girl of sixty. If the writer before us did not modestly profess to write to the young only,—(though in truth his books are fit for boys, just as Dr Johnson said claret was,—being fit for men also),—his style would attract marked attention. It is infinitely better English than that of the many bagmen by nature, and literary men by presumption, who contrive to get reviewed and talked about, and who, failing that, would review and talk about themselves. And why? Fundamentally, no doubt, because a graceful way of expressing himself is a natural gift of Mr Edgar's, but also, in great measure, because he has long studied a few standard and canonical English authors. Hume is evidently one of

these, and Bolingbroke another,—men who are incomparable stylists in their different modes. But Mr Edgar is also, we take it, that rare thing now-a-days,—a reader of Clarendon. Now, Clarendon, besides his genius as a painter of *portraits*,—a branch of literary art in which Isaac Disraeli thought him equal to Tacitus,—and this is hardly an exaggeration,—Clarendon, we say, is the very ideal and exemplar of a style at once flowing and stately,—full of dignity, yet full of sweetness. His influence on the last century was immense. It is very slight on our own. This is partly owing to political causes; for the world has heard so much against his policy, that it has come to distrust his narrative. But there are other reasons,—non-political ones,—for the popular neglect of this great writer. His style, like that of Bolingbroke, is a *long-sentenced* style; and what our generation really loves is the epigrammatic manner. Our popular style is, in fact, still based on the later manner of Dr Johnson,—on the concise pointed English,—(and, just as happened in Gothic architecture, the *pointed style* succeeded to that of the fuller and rotunder *circular arch* style in our literature),—which the great Doctor wrote in his later years. He had been so long talking, that he had insensibly modified his early turgidity; and we, carrying his change still farther, are in reality *pollard-Johnsons*.

But this is a digression that might carry us anywhere. We were saying that Mr Edgar has obviously studied Clarendon; and that Clarendon ought to be studied more, is an addition for which the reader will excuse us. We shall now quote a specimen of Mr Edgar's way of telling a story;—not a passage chosen as showing the influence of

any particular writer on him, but simply a sketch complete in itself, and affording a pleasant example of his ease and elegance of hand. It is a sketch of a Cavalier,—Dormer, Lord Carnarvon, who fell at the battle of Newbury. From these Dormers, Philip Dormer Stanhope, the famous Lord Chesterfield, took one of his names:—

#### CARNARVON.

“One day, while Charles was still before Gloucester, there rode into the royal camp a young English earl, whose wit and valour made him of high account among ‘the barons of England who fought for the crown.’ This was Robert Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon, one of the gayest and most graceful of Cavaliers. Tall and slender, with high aquiline features, and chestnut hair waving in loose locks, the high-spirited nobleman won all hearts in his own day, as he still wins the hearts of those who look upon him as he appears on the canvas of Vandyke, in his loose jerkin of velvet, his rich collar of lace, and his embroidered sword-belt.

“The family of Dormer was one of respectable antiquity in England, and flourished for generations as gentlemen of Bucks. At length one of its members, after having been created a baronet by King James, was elevated to the peerage with the rank of a baron. A son of the lord who also flourished in the reign of James, married Alice, daughter of Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton, in Lancashire; and they had one son named Robert. The husband of the Lancashire lady died before his father, the first Lord Dormer; and when, in 1616, the old peer went the way of all flesh, her son Robert succeeded to the barony.

“The young Lord Dormer would seem to have had all the advantages enjoyed at that period by men born with silver spoons in their mouths. After being educated at Oxford, he travelled not only on the Continent, but even in Turkey and

the East. On his return, he was recognised as a nobleman of high courage and accomplishments; but he appears to have been extravagantly fond of field sports, and to have had some liking for the gaming-table. While gaming, however, he abstained from the deep potations in which many of his friends indulged, and gained some reputation for the moderation which he exercised in regard to the social cup.

“But young English nobles were soon to have more serious occupation than flying hawks, riding after hounds, or rattling dice. Some years after Charles succeeded to the English crown, Lord Dormer was metamorphosed into Earl of Carnarvon; and, when those troubles began of which he was not destined to witness the end, he at once took part with the King. His loyalty appears to have been put to the test; for he had espoused a daughter of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; and that nobleman having taken the side of the Parliament, implored him to abandon the Royal cause. Carnarvon, however, was not to be coaxed or coerced into a change of politics. ‘I pray you,’ he said to his father-in-law, ‘to leave me to my honour and my allegiance.’

“When the struggle in Parliament became more keen, Carnarvon did not swerve from his faith; and when war broke out he girded on his sword, mustered his men, and mounted his war-steed. At the time of Strafford’s impeachment, Carnarvon exerted himself strenuously to save the great Lord-Lieutenant. When, in 1642, Hampden left London to rouse the men of Bucks to arms on behalf of the Parliament, the Cavalier earl hurried thither also to rally loyal hearts around the King’s banner. On the day of Edgehill, when Cavalier and Roundhead first met in the shock of war, Carnarvon commanded a strong squadron of cavalry under Rupert; and he took part in that Prince’s too eager pursuit of the Parliament’s horse, which left the Royalist infantry exposed. While thus doing his duty in the field, the earl won fame in the Cavalier camp by



his conversational brilliancy ; and 'Carnarvon's keen blade and keener wit' were celebrated in popular song.

"On the morning of the 20th of September 1643, Carnarvon was at Newbury and elate with anticipation. Early in the day, and ere yet Essex had moved to Bigg's Hill, he was seen surrounded by a number of light-hearted Cavaliers, and busily engaged measuring a gateway with his sword.

"What is my Lord Carnarvon doing?" asked a passer-by.

"Ascertaining whether Essex's horns will pass through, when we bring him in prisoner,' Carnarvon answered with reckless vivacity ; and his comrades, at this allusion to the Parliamentary General's matrimonial misfortunes, laughed long and loud.

"In the battle of Newbury, Carnarvon, at the head of his cavalry, bore himself with his wonted valour. But he was not destined to see another field. After making a brilliant charge, and routing a body of Parliamentary horse that had come into the action as Essex's body-guard, the earl was riding carelessly back through the scattered troopers, when one of them, recognising his tall figure and aquiline features, ran him through the body.

"When Carnarvon fell, he was seen by a friend, who came to his assistance.

"You are hurt, my Lord,' said this personage.

"My hurt is mortal,' said the earl. 'But is the King safe?'

"The wounded Cavalier indeed had no reason to indulge in hope. Even as he spoke death was rapidly approaching. He had the consolation, however, in that hour when he felt that soul and body were about to part, of believing that, in drawing his sword in the King's cause, he had done his duty, and of knowing that he had done his duty with a clear conscience as well as a fearless heart.

"Can I carry any message from you to the King?' asked his friend, dwelling on his last word.



“‘No,’ answered Carnarvon, ‘I will not die with a suit in my mouth to any king but the King of Heaven.’

“That evening, as the sun went down behind the hills of Berks, a dead body passed into Newbury, and was conveyed along the street, stretched across a horse, ‘like that of a calf.’ The Royalists of the little town looked gloomily towards the beast and its burden. The corpse was that of a Cavalier. It was Carnarvon !”

This is an average, but not more than an average, specimen of Mr Edgar’s literary powers. In the exercise of those powers, he has produced quite a little library of historical works,—generous in sentiment, sound in principle, and pleasant to read. Our readers will understand us, when we say, that every *gentleman* may safely and profitably place them in the hands of his boys. And this alone is no mean praise. The wise ancients well knew the indelible nature of early impressions;—how, as Quintilian says,—“*natura tenacissimi sumus eorum quæ rudibus annis percipimus: ut sapor, quo nova imbuas, durat; nec lanarum colores, quibus simplex ille candor mutatus est, elui possunt.*”

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## THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF DEMOCRACY.

(*Edinburgh Courant, February 1862*).

AMONG the disappointments with which Democracy has afflicted its European and American admirers, there is one that a philosophical Conservative views with peculiar

satisfaction. Perhaps the most plausible of the notions which excited Europe in the last half of the eighteenth century,—(and which in our languid age it is difficult to get anybody either to attack or defend),—was that we could always command a rush of superior talent for the State by removing the artificial barriers which kept it out. People believed then in the “Village Hampden,” and thought you had only to bring him forward, and educate him, and that he was fit for anything. “Give us,”—shouted the Frenchman,—the “Open Career.” We will base everything on it,—answered the Yankee,—establishing a Constitution in which all men were declared free and equal. Great Britain took things more quietly; but the seductive philosophy circulated in her literature, and helped to produce her Reform Bill,—which luckily did not create half the changes anticipated by its friends. Well, a considerable period has rolled over; and the world by its want of interest in the subject tacitly proclaims its disappointment. The “Village Hampden” is at a discount; and our village “Miltons” continue to be “inglorious,” though unhappily they have ceased to be “mute.” We at home can afford to take things easily,—at all events for the present. It is true that we have no great statesmen, except those who might easily have attained power a century ago. It is true that our professions seem rather to be deteriorating, and that the fact of men’s becoming officers and barristers, who fifty years since would have been clerks or bagmen, seems to do more harm by lowering the tone of such bodies, than good by any fresh access of talent it brings to them. But we can wait, and look about us. Our institutions, and the free-

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dom they secure, are safe at all events, and we have the inestimable privilege of studying the effect of thorough-going changes in our neighbours. To Frenchmen and Americans, the case is different. They attained the "Open Career" by making a clean sweep of every obstacle, and any disappointment they may feel, is embittered by remorse on the one hand, and saddened by the hopelessness of the future on the other. France no doubt is a great Power, and the cheap luxury which the common Frenchman wants is probably more widely attainable than it ever was. But France had far higher ambitions than these a century ago. Not only did she desire political freedom, but she desired to head European speculation and European literature. As it is, her present greatness is chiefly based on mere force ; her freedom is still a hope, and her literature is fast becoming a memory. France may be great, but Frenchmen are smaller than they used to be. The brilliant old society is replaced by a mere monied horde ; Montesquieu is unrepresented ; and Voltaire represented only by impure novelists, who have lost the art of writing classic French. Such facts may be nothing to a common Parisian of to-day, but they would have been death to the aspiring young men who were young in '89. To do these men justice they believed in an ideal. Some of them became savages, but they had a certain poetry in their savagery, and anticipated anything but a money-making despotism, prosaic even in its debauchery, as the result of all their struggles and all their blood.

How equally disappointing the results of Democracy are in America, we all know. What we are concerned with

to-day, is the intellectual disappointment, as in France's case, and this is still more marked in America than in France. The greatest men of the States have been excluded from the Presidency by what now seems to be as regularly developed a system as that of the Athenian ostracism ; and Mr Gladstone or Mr Disraeli would never have risen as high in the great Democratic Republic, as they have contrived to do in the most aristocratic state of society existing in Europe. But, on the old revolutionary theory, not only ought Gladstones and Disraelis to have risen higher in America—they ought to have been more plentiful there than here. Yet the failure of the theory is as conspicuous in the one particular as in the other. America succeeds only in breeding second-rate men, and she puts them, when she does get them, into third-rate places. Democracy thus exhibits, on that side of the Atlantic, a double failure. It fails in producing its men, and, at the same time, it fails in rewarding them.

So important a fact is clearly connected with general laws, which deserve careful and scientific study. In the first place, we may learn from it that the supply of superior men does not depend on circumstances only, as is often calmly assumed. If shaking the social bag would have brought them out, America would have had plenty, and France, too ; and *we* should have had more in proportion as we assimilated ourselves to those countries. But what if shaking the bag,—besides its natural impotence to improve the contents,—should have a tendency to send out the worst of the contents first ? We are inclined to think that Democracy will soon be generally admitted to operate so,—though Mr Carlyle and other writers have

vainly endeavoured to teach the great truth in question to this age. For, a man's superiority just consists in what he has not in common with the multitude,—and yet under Democracy the multitude has to decide whether he is a superior man or no. As they cannot understand *him*, they take those whom they can understand, and hence inferior talent is at a kind of *premium* in Democracies,—both because it is superior to no talent at all, and because it is not so superior as to be at *too* great a height above the standard of the vulgar. Second-class greatness in everything is just what the mob likes. A mob would undoubtedly prefer Roebuck to Cuffey, for instance. But then it would also prefer Roebuck to Burke ; and what is more, it would be content with Cuffey till it heard Roebuck. A mob does not improve of itself ; it is more stupidly Conservative than the stupidest Conservative in its own way. And the worst of Democracy is that it has a tendency to stop improvement, because it consecrates, so to speak, the vulgar opinion. Where there is a governing upper class,—so that it be not too narrow or exclusive,—the mass rises in its tone and condition, after and in imitation of it. But where the mob *is* the Government, there is an unimproving level ; and, above all, a low type of individuality, for which no vulgar material prosperity in a nation will atone. It is the marked and decided lack of individuality,—the want of great men,—the poverty in heroic and brilliant characters,—about our modern Democratic Societies, which we think the most offensive but yet most instructive phenomenon of these times.



## THE DELEGATE—AN ECLOGUE.

AFTER COLLINS.

*(Puppet Show, 1848).**Scene—John Street. Time—Mid-day.*

IN moody temper, through the crowded street,  
The Chartist Pugsby toiled with weary feet;  
An empty blue-bag in his hand he bore,  
His breeches-pocket held but scanty store.  
The day was hot—a public-house stood near,  
But Pugsby could not spare the tin for beer.  
With desperate sorrow wild, th' affrighted man  
Thrice slapp'd his corduroys, and thus began:  
“ ‘Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,  
When from my shop-board first I took my way!’

“ Ah ! little thought I that to raise the wind,  
In this great town, so hard a job I'd find !  
Bethink thee, Pugsby, how wilt thou assuage,  
When fails thy purse, thy landlord's savage rage !  
Soon must thy purse be empty as thy head—  
Then where, O Pugsby, wilt thou look for bread ?  
Here tick is difficult, and duns are rough,  
For London tradesmen all are up to snuff.  
‘ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,  
When from my shop-board first I took my way !’



“Cursed be the vanity which can persuade  
Weak men to take sedition as a trade;  
The peaceful shop is better than the hall,  
The kettle’s singing than the ‘patriot’s’ bawl.  
Yet vanity can tempt us up to town,  
For boys to chaff, and Peelers to put down.  
‘Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,  
When from my shop-board first I took my way.’

“Oh, cease my fears!—all frantic as I go,  
(Like carter’s horse) I hear the sounds of wo (! !)  
What if a special constable I meet,  
Or rampant Peeler seize me on his beat?  
O hapless youth! for she thy love hath won,  
The tender Peggy will be most undone!  
Big swelled my heart in parting with the maid,  
When blubbering in the kitchen thus she said,—  
‘Farewell the youth whom sighs could not detain,  
And plummy Peggy’s heart implored in vain!’  
Oh, let me safely to the fair return,  
Wipe off her tears, and cut this here concern!”

He said, and called on Heaven to bless the day  
When to his shop-board back he bent his way.

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#### ON AN ANSWERER OF RENAN.

You answered Renan? That is strange, if true,  
Men only answer when they’re spoken to,  
And Renan speaks to scholars, not to you.

## CAPTAIN SPEKE.

*(Edinburgh Courant, September 1864).*

THE feeling of pain and pity with which the news of Captain Speke's death has been everywhere received, shows that the country is still alive to the importance of those fine qualities of the national character which he happily illustrated by his whole career. Scotland has produced more than her own share of African travellers, but we believe that the wildest lover of "nationality" amongst us would hardly deny that Speke eclipsed them all. It seems to be agreed that new researches may extend or modify the details of his great discovery, but that he did essentially discover the ancient secret that he sought. The controversies from which he was so awfully snatched away leave his supreme merit among African travellers untouched. And when more is known, as more will be known, of the Lake Nyanza and its region, he will still be looked back to as the virtual founder of our modern knowledge of the whole subject.

The interest attaching to such a man is not confined to the special discoveries which he makes. There is an interest of character about him, throwing light on his class and his nation. The appearance of one Speke implies the existence of hundreds of young fellows high-spirited and adventurous, and sharing in the traditions of a high-spirited and adventurous nation. If a strict inquiry were made into the origin of much that is now most familiar as well

as valuable in our civilisation, it would be found to be due to just this kind of men. One traveller brings home a new fruit,—another a strange bird,—a third an art which gets naturalised in its new country,—while all contribute to that intercourse and commerce between nations which has now become one of the master-facts of the world. It has been so, in generation after generation, up through the times of the Elizabethan Shirleys and Willoughbys to those of Sir John Mandeville, and the still earlier warriors and pilgrims of the Crusades. And,—what is especially worth notice in the history of the subject,—all this gain was come at by men whose object primarily was not gain at all. A restless hunger for adventure, an inexplicable longing to see strange lands, these have been the motive force of discoveries the most practical and profitable in their results. The mill has ground the corn, but it is the breeze of poetry that has turned the sails of the mill. In reading the books of Captain Speke himself, one does not gather that he was ever profoundly intent on his discovery for the sake of its scientific value, much less for that of the fame which it might bring him. He liked the excitement, the sport he met on the way, the very danger itself of the journey, with its varieties and uncertainties. Now, this is a temper which competitive examinations and those kind of things do not test, and which much in our new way of looking at educational questions has no tendency to develop. It is essentially the temper of a gentry rather than either of a commercial class, or of a nobility inclined to luxury and the arts. Speke inherited it from his ancestral Somersetshire,—from the county of Admiral Blake,—the county that sent many a rover in the old times to the western

ports of Bristol and Bridgewater,—a county of moderate-sized estates, and a certain primitive and old-fashioned standard of manners. We must not be too eager to get rid of the influences under which such characters are formed, under which you have the apparently curious combination in a man of unrivalled services to geography with a passion for partridge-shooting. There is no necessary incompatibility between new ideas and old habits. But, somehow, we rarely see new ideas advocated, whether for purposes of political improvement or otherwise, without their being accompanied by a querulous depreciation of the favourite amusements and tastes of other times. Yet, surely our age has seen nothing more characteristically English than that the source of the Nile should have been reached, not by an elaborately equipped expedition of *savans*, but by a Somersetshire squire's sporting son, with a fowling-piece in his hand,—a young Indian soldier on leave, to whom science was one of his amusements. The force of the old English individuality and pluck, seasoned with humour, could not farther go. At the same time, however, we must not overlook the importance of Speke's military position in the matter, by forgetting that we owe his triumphs to the fact that he was in a service where his value was known and appreciated. One most important result of Britain's possession of a foreign empire which makes our military men travellers by the nature of their employment, is that their cloth holds such an honourable place in literature and science. The names of Rennell and Leake,—as in our own day of Rawlinson,—have a place in letters as distinctly as in the Army List. This is honourable to a profession which gets its fair share of obloquy

from the enemies of established institutions, and which is often represented as hostile or indifferent to the arts of peace, and the triumphs of civilisation.

One regret we must all have in the case of the lamented gentleman of whom we have been speaking, a regret, however, felt not so much on his own account as on that of the country. He received,—as has been justly pointed out by a journal with which we have seldom reason to agree,—marks of honour from foreign Governments never extended to him by his own. Her Majesty's present Ministers seem to have disdained to recommend to her Majesty for distinctions of any kind, a name which will be not the least among the illustrations of her reign in future ages. The gallant soldier, the dauntless explorer, remained undecorated and undistinguished, while the orders intended by the great Sovereigns of past times for men of valour and genius were being bestowed on the obscurest supernumeraries of the Whig theatre. We can quite understand that the ancient Somersetshire gentleman was too proud,—that the chase-loving soldier was too simple,—to practise those arts of sycophancy which have made certain "scientific" celebrities of this age ignobly prosperous and notorious. We all know that science has its social toadies, equally skilful in making reputations out of the labours of their own class, and getting advancement through the favour of their superiors. Captain Speke was not this kind of man. But it is the business of Government to do for modest merit what obtrusive and servile mediocrity does for itself; and to save this country from the disgrace of being the last in Europe to recognise personal superiority, when it comes unrecommended by titles and wealth.



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH POETRY.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, November 1861).

WE are inclined to rank the beautiful little volume, of which the name is subjoined to this article, among the most important books lately published. For it must not be regarded *only* as an anthology or literary nosegay. It is not merely a jar containing some of the sweetest poetic honey that has been hived during these three centuries in the British oak: it is a valuable contribution to the history of English literature; inasmuch as it is an anthology compiled on philosophical principles, and under the dictation of a highly-cultivated—while exquisite—taste. The editor divides English Poetry into Four Epochs, each represented by a Book, and each defined with much felicity and at the same time brevity, in the Notes. He views the Epochs as connected together, not chronologically only, but by the finest, subtlest, and yet strongest threads of influence,—influence historical, moral, traditional, literary. And to him, also, the poetry of every period is not something existing *in* the period, and apart from it, but something rooted in the soil of its innermost life, and related to all that is best among contemporary things. In fact, poetry is seen to be the true Linnæan *Flower-clock* of History,—blooming and fading and bloom-

\* *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. Selected and Arranged, with Notes, by Francis Turner Palgrave, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford.



ing again in new colours, as the day of the world rolls along.

Such is the well-designed plan—well-achieved by Mr Francis Turner Palgrave in this “Golden Treasury.” There is a scholarly finish about all that he has done, whether as editor or writer, in the volume, which deserves the highest respect, and which we hail with pleasure from a man inheriting the honourable name he bears.

Let us first quote a passage from Mr Palgrave in which he tells us under what principles of selection, and by what course of investigation, he has arrived at the result we have praised :—

#### THE EDITOR'S CANONS.

“The editor is acquainted with no strict and exhaustive definition of Lyrical Poetry; but he has found the task of practical decision increase in clearness and in facility as he advanced with the work, whilst keeping in view a few simple principles. ‘Lyrical’ has been here held essentially to imply that each poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation. In accordance with this, narrative, descriptive, and didactic poems—unless accompanied by rapidity of movement, brevity, and the colouring of human passion—have been excluded. Humorous poetry, except in the very unfrequent instances where a truly poetical tone pervades the whole, with what is strictly personal, occasional, and religious, has been considered foreign to the idea of the book. Blank verse and the ten-syllable couplet, with all pieces markedly dramatic, have been rejected as alien from what is commonly understood as Song, and rarely conforming to lyrical conditions in treatment. . . .

“That a poem shall be worthy of the writer’s genius,—that it shall reach a perfection commensurate with its aim,—that we should require finish in proportion to brevity,—that passion,

colour, and originality cannot atone for serious imperfections in clearness, unity, or truth,—that a few good lines do not make a good poem,—that popular estimate is serviceable as a guide-post more than as a compass,—above all, that excellence should be looked for rather in the whole than in the parts—such and other such canons have been always steadily regarded. He may, however, add that the pieces chosen, and a far larger number rejected, have been carefully and repeatedly considered; and that he has been aided throughout by two friends of independent and exercised judgment, besides the distinguished person [Mr Tennyson] addressed in the dedication. . . .

“Chalmers’ vast collection, with the whole works of all accessible poets not contained in it, and the best anthologies of different periods, have been twice systematically read through; and it is hence improbable that any omissions which may be regretted are due to oversight. The poems are printed entire, except in a very few instances (specified in the notes) where a stanza has been omitted. The omissions have been risked only when the piece could be thus brought to a closer lyrical unity; and, as essentially opposed to this unity, extracts, obviously such, are excluded. In regard to the text, the purpose of the book has appeared to justify the choice of the most poetical version, wherever more than one exists; and much labour has been given to present each poem, in disposition, spelling, and punctuation, to the greatest advantage.”

These canons we venture to pronounce sound; and we attribute Mr Palgrave’s success to the strictness with which he has adhered to them. His task was a twofold one, not alone the selection of a historically representative series of poems, but of a series of poems marked by perennial and universal, as well as representative, interest. Had he worked under only one of these conditions, he might still have given us a valuable book, and it would have cost

him less labour. We should have had much curious and amusing, as well as fine, matter ; Donne's "Pair of Compasses," perhaps ; the verses in which Lord Herbert of Cherbury anticipates the metre of "In Memoriam ;" Cowley's "Clad all in White ;" or the poem of Crashaw on "St Cecilia," in which occurs that truly exquisite couplet,—

" But though she cannot tell you why,  
She can love and she can die."

And in one way the poetic Epochs might thus have been more vividly discriminated than they are here, for they would have reappeared with all their *peculiarities* strictly so called, their quaintnesses, temporary moods and humours, and freaks of garb. But Mr Palgrave resisted the temptation of making this kind of impression, because he had a higher object in view, to gather, namely, from each poet only what might have a *living* interest for "all time." The result is,—and let it be well pondered,—a degree of uniformity of tone, a harmonious similarity, such as would never have been seen in a collection dealing with any but the highest, choicest, and most finished poetry. "Great excellence," as our Editor well says, "has from the beginning of things been even more uniform than mediocrity." This is a lesson to the odd and eccentric among writers, and generally to those who despise the characteristics by which writers become classical. And for this, as well as other reasons, we should like Mr Palgrave's book to be read by our younger poets, and especially by our newspaper critics, who judge by a rough kind of *tasting*, which does better for judges of cheese, than for men who venture

to pronounce on the "milk of Paradise." We have seldom met a book more instructive when studied as the result of culture, than the "Golden Treasury," which is evidently the work of one who regards all poets of all ages as explanatory of each other, and to whom the

φαίνεται μοι πᾶσις ἴσος θάισιν

of Sappho is as familiar as the Ligurinus of Horace, the Sonnets of Petrarch, the Tragedies of Racine, or the "Break, break, break," of the Laureate.

Book First embraces the period from Sir Thomas Wyatt of Henry the Eighth's reign to *our* countryman, Drummond of Hawthornden, and thus takes in the "Elizabethan Poetry." We may fairly call this the most poetical Epoch of the Four; and early as it was, and young, poor, and undeveloped, as England then comparatively was, Mr Palgrave gives sixty-one specimens of its poetry—nearly a fourth of his whole materials. The Epoch was characterised by natural force, fertility, and variety, but chiefly, we think, by the fact that poetry permeated the whole body of society, and thus, itself, was tinted by, and flavoured with, all the essential characteristics of that great and energetic time. The Fourth Book—of which Wordsworth is the presiding spirit, as Shakspeare, Milton, Gray, are of the previous Three—contains *more* poems than the First, of course. But it is significant that they are drawn from *the* poets, and the poets only, of the age. In Book First, we have charming little creations from wags like Nash, from courtiers like Vere, from a diplomatist like Wyatt, as well as from Shakspeare, Spencer, and Marlow. Take the following:—

## A RENUNCIATION.

"If women could be fair, and yet not fond,  
Or that their love were firm, not fickle still,  
I would not marvel that they make men bond  
By service long to purchase their goodwill;  
But when I see how frail those creatures are,  
I muse that men forget themselves so far.

"To mark the choice they make, and how they change,  
How oft from Phœbus they do flee to Pan;  
Unsettled still like haggards wild they range,  
These gentle birds that fly from man to man;  
Who would not scorn and shake them from the fist,  
And let them fly, fair fools, which way they list?

"Yet for disport we fawn and flatter both,  
To pass the time when nothing else can please,  
And train them to our lure with subtle oath,  
Till, weary of their wiles, ourselves we ease;  
And then we say when we their fancy try,  
To play with fools, O what a fool was I!"

This is singularly pleasing; it has the charm of *simpli-*  
*city* and the charm of *ingenuity* in one. But it is the work  
of an amateur—Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of  
Oxford—whose quarrel with Sir Philip Sydney is among  
the best remembered bits of gossip of the Elizabethan age.  
In Wordsworth's era, men made a business of poetry,—in  
Shakspeare's, they carried their poetry into all their busi-  
ness; though we don't pretend that this way of putting  
it has more than the half-truth of an epigram.

We have said that Shakspeare presides over the First  
Book, in which his lyrics and sonnets play a great part;  
and along with him we have Spenser, Sidney, Daniel,



Drayton, besides the poets already mentioned. It is, indeed, one good part of Mr Palgrave's plan to quote, while always quoting the best poetry, *as many* of the poets as possible. And this gives a better notion of the literary opulence of the nation than anything else could, for there are seventy-four poets drawn upon, in all !

"Our Muses"—says the Editor, in coming to Book Second,—“now give expression to political feeling, to religious thought, to a high philosophical statesmanship, in writers such as Marvell, Herbet, and Wotton ; whilst in Marvell and Milton, again, we find the first noble attempts at pure description of nature, destined in our own ages to be continued and equalled. Meanwhile the poetry of simple passion—although before 1660 often deformed by verbal fancies and conceits of thought, and afterwards by levity and an artificial tone—produced in Herrick and Waller some charming pieces of more finished art than the Elizabethan ; until in the courtly compliments of Sedley it seems to exhaust itself, and lie almost dormant for the hundred years between the days of Wither and Suckling and the days of Burns and Cowper. That the change from our early style to the modern brought with it at first a loss of nature and simplicity is undeniable ; yet the far bolder and wider scope which poetry took between 1620 and 1700, and the successful efforts then made to gain greater clearness in expression, in their results have been no slight compensation.”

A good and pregnant bit of criticism. The selections are again admirably made. We are especially glad to see Marvell's fine Horatian Ode upon Cromwell given in full. Who has not somewhere seen the stanzas on the “Execution of Charles ?”—

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“ While round the arméd bands  
Did clap their bloody hands ;



He nothing common did or mean  
 Upon that memorable scene,  
     But with his keener eye  
     The axe's edge did try;

Nor call'd the gods, with vulgar spite,  
 To vindicate his helpless right;  
     But bow'd his comely head  
     Down, as upon a bed."

And Marvell was a Republican! Yes; but the Republicans of that day were scholars and gentlemen.

Here is a little strain in quite a different key, but still belonging to the same period. Waller's "Go, lovely Rose," is hacknied now, but his "Girdle" is less known:—

#### ON A GIRDLE.

"That which her slender waist confined  
 Shall now my joyful temples bind:  
 No monarch but would give his crown  
 His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere,  
 The pale which held that lovely deer:  
 My joy, my grief, my hope, my love  
 Did all within this circle move.

A narrow compass! and yet there  
 Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair:  
 Give me but what this ribband bound,  
 Take all the rest the Sun goes round."

We have only a few such prettinesses as this, combining English sentiment with French epigram, in the language; they belong just to the time of Waller and Suckling. The Elizabethans had not acquired the *familiar*

finish; the generation of Congreve retained the wit, but had spoiled the sentiment.

This Book takes in both Milton and Dryden, the last of the early poets, the first of the new. Dryden holds a great place in English literature, and not only as a poet, for he wrote at once the first modern poetry, and the first modern prose. Over his genius we pass as over a bridge from Milton to Pope.

Let us again extract from Mr Palgrave, from his Note this time on the poetry of his Third Book, that of the eighteenth century:—

#### ENGLISH POETRY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

“It is more difficult to characterise the English poetry of the eighteenth century than that of any other. For it was an age not only of spontaneous transition, but of bold experiment; it includes not only such divergences of thought as distinguish the ‘Rape of the Lock’ from the ‘Parish Register,’ but such vast contemporaneous differences as lie between Pope and Collins, Burns and Cowper. Yet we may clearly trace three leading moods or tendencies: the aspects of courtly or educated life represented by Pope and carried to exhaustion by his followers; the poetry of Nature and of Man, viewed through a cultivated, and at the same time an impassioned, frame of mind by Collins and Gray; lastly, the study of vivid and simple narrative, including natural description, begun by Gay and Thomson, pursued by Burns and others in the north, and established in England by Goldsmith, Percy, Crabbe, and Cowper. Great varieties in style accompanied these diversities in aim; poets could not always distinguish the matter suitable for subjects so far apart; and the union of the language of courtly and of common life, exhibited most conspicuously by Burns, has given a tone to the poetry of that century which is better explained by

reference to its historical origin than by naming it, in the common criticism of our day, artificial. There is, again, a nobleness of thought, a courageous aim at high and, in a strict sense, manly excellence in many of the writers; nor can that period be justly termed tame and wanting in originality which produced poems such as Pope's Satires, Gray's Odes and Elegy, the Ballads of Gay and Carey, the Songs of Burns and Cowper. In truth, poetry at this as at all times was a more or less unconscious mirror of the genius of the age; and the brave and admirable spirit of inquiry which made the eighteenth century the turning-time in European civilisation is reflected faithfully in its verse."

We need add little to this summary, especially as the poems of this period—Gray's, for example, and Cowper's—are probably more read still than either earlier or later ones. The change first introduced by Dryden, and doubtless connected with the great popular movement, and breaking-up of English life, of the Civil War, took the form of a more colloquial and simple diction in the first instance, which reached its perfection in the Queen Anne men. In natural affinity with this was a predominance of common sense over imaginative views, more or less marked in all the poetry of the last century, and working in harmony with the general social transition from feudal to nineteenth century life. To call the poetry belonging to this phase of thought "artificial" is certainly an unsatisfactory inasmuch as it is a very incomplete way of describing it.\* But the epithet is not unjust when applied to a great deal of what was popular between Dryden and Byron; and Mr

\* We wish our Editor had given Johnson's "Lines on Levett," as being truly *characteristic* of some of the best qualities of the century, and not less *poetical* than several specimens in his volume.

Palgrave, we think, would allow the term "revival" (though somewhat vulgarised of late) to be a right one to apply to the movement, which, heralded by the Ballads of Burns (whose Scottish character, however, limited his *influence*\*), and practically begun by Coleridge, was made general by Scott and Byron, and culminated in Wordsworth. Each of these men,—the men of the Fourth Book of the "Golden Treasury,"—might well have an essay to himself. But we shall only say that the tendency of the School was to combine Elizabethan and seventeenth century depth of feeling and truthfulness, and the old philosophising habit, with the clearer, freer, more practised diction, and greater recognition of everyday and homely life, of the intervening period. The *causes* of this revival, which, however, should not be viewed as unconnected with the immediately preceding time, might open a large inquiry. It is sufficient to say now that there is always an incalculable element in such events; and that, moreover, *we* are still too near this particular one, to be able to see it as a separable whole with quite satisfactory distinctness. As in the case of a ship ahead of us at night, we can make out *the lights* and *their* position, but the general hull is dark and undefined to the eye. We must, indeed, content ourselves generally—we speak now of the whole subject—with having given a mere outline of the inquiry suggested by Mr Palgrave's interesting work. The thoughtful reader who cares to pursue it, or who only wants a pure and lasting pleasure from the *data* on which it is based, will take care to procure the work for himself.

\* It deserves to be remembered to the credit of Gifford of the *Quarterly*, the forgotten satirist of the "Baviad" and "Mæviad," that he early saw the importance of our great countryman.

## HOLLAND.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, September 1863).

WE have before us some notes made during a recent tour in Holland, a *résumé* of the results of which may not be without interest at this period of the year. It is the custom of the British tourist, for the most part, to go as *far* as he possibly can for his money. He measures his success by his mileage; sees nothing in any country but the regular "sights;" and making no inquiry about institutions or manners, returns, having viewed Europe only from the outside. Holland is passed over with little notice by the ordinary autumnal scamperer of this kind, though it is precisely, from race, history, religion, and social life, a country calculated to throw light on our own. The people are essentially Teutonic; so like the British even in physical type that you may easily mistake a Dutchman for an Englishman or Scotchman at a *table d'hôte*. Their long War of Independence, their obstinate Protestantism, their commercial and colonial development, their party struggles; ending in the constitutional monarchy of a great family mixed up with the noblest part of their history, are features with which we should all sympathise, even if our ancestors had no part or lot in them as friends or rivals. In homelier matters, an everyday sympathy between us and the Hollanders is very natural. They resemble us much more in private character and ordinary habits than the French do. They are intensely domestic; great people



for the ties of family and relationship; steady church-goers; industrious and accumulative; given to dividing into "sets," and maintaining social distinctions, with a very strong national feeling, and a very strong historical feeling. Even the external aspect of their country, though new to a native of these islands, slides into his familiarity with a certain ease. Its rich level plains recall parts of Essex, and of the eastern counties of England. There is no *romantic* beauty such as we have in the North; or such as—bathed in a balmy and voluptuous atmosphere, and hallowed by ruins of immemorial antiquity—makes the charm of Southern Europe. But there is everywhere a cheerful prosperous prettiness, kept fresh by a continual breeze in the hottest days from the sea; and in the towns, the old red buildings, each retaining its own individuality, the quiet canals shaded with chestnut and elm trees, the deep rich toned bells, the lively tinkle of the carillon, exert something of the influence of a simple poetry. France and her Revolution, much as they have done to modernise the Netherlands, have not swept away all the primitive character, the old-fashioned respectfulness, cordiality, and social subordination of Dutch life. Meanwhile, the comparative isolation of the country in Europe keeps its national peculiarities alive; and the traveller still recognises there that quiet, broad, shrewd humour which is found in the *Colloquia* of Erasmus, and on the canvas of Jan Steen.

We hear little of their politics now-a-days in Europe, but that is a good sign. Their Parliament is chiefly occupied with colonial questions. There is, in fact, little for democratic agitators to agitate about. The Suffrage is as



low as any "Liberal" gifted with common sense wishes to see it; while the political career is so open that one of the present ministers is a man who commenced life as mate of a ship. The House of Orange is strong, not only by being rooted in the very history of the country, but because there is a general persuasion that without the House of Orange, the national unity and independence could not be maintained. The very faults of the Princes of that family are such as the people readily pardons; they are gallant and generous men; and the present King, fond of his sport, and of his palace in Guelderland, is content to rule by ministers of whatever party finds itself in power. The questions which divide the Church, though sufficiently grave, are not questions that embroil it with the State. Accordingly, there has been leisure left to the statesmen of Holland to attend to those social questions which in larger countries are often thrust aside by the pressure of party politics. Thus the educational system of the country is one of the best in Europe; and the army is maintained on a scale which would do credit to a much more populous nation. But the chief energy of the people is absorbed in industry. The windmills that everywhere dot the landscape hardly labour more steadily in grinding grain, in sawing timber, in raising the water to prevent the overflowing of the canals, than the Dutch themselves. Heavy labour has become a habit with them, and they set about it with a steady persistency which is curious to watch, as they push their ponderous barges along the canals with poles, or lift the weighty bridges for the shipping to pass under, or trudge patiently under heavy burdens by the sides of their quays. It is this quality which has kept their con-

merce flourishing long after its decline from the meridian greatness of the seventeenth century, and in spite of the heavy taxation which has loaded their backs for ages. Accordingly, the country thrives in all its interests, commercial and agricultural. The trade with England has been especially increasing in dairy and farm produce; and Englishmen have even recently been tempted to outbid the natives in the high rents given for the farms that lie near the watershed of the Maas.

After this brief glance at the general characteristics of the country, we proceed to notice such points as are more peculiarly interesting to Scotsmen. The general organisation of the Dutch and Scotch Churches is, as we all know, the same,—Consistory, Classis, and Synod answering in the one, to Kirk-Session, Presbytery, and Assembly in the other. The ministers of the Scotch Churches at Amsterdam and Rotterdam are paid by the State, and sit in the Synod which meets at the Hague, like the other ministers of the Netherlands Reformed Church. Anciently, the Scotch population at Rotterdam was so considerable that a long and important street built on one of the dykes bore the name of the “Scotch Dyke,” which it still retains in common parlance to this day. Portraits of the old pastors,—the earliest of them in a beard,—hang in the vestry-room of their present worthy successor, the Reverend J. M. Brown. Their families became naturalised in the country, and some prospered so well that from one of them came a Burgomaster of Rotterdam in the last century, while the late Minister of Marine, an Admiral, was the grandson of another. As the Scottish colonisation of the city, so to speak, dwindled, the congregation dwindled

too, and at present it does not exceed a hundred, composed mainly of families of Scottish descent rather than of Scotsmen proper. In consequence of this decline in numbers, Government some years ago suppressed one of the two pastors of the charge. Rotterdam has no less than nine Protestant denominations, a list of which is now before us in a document prepared periodically, and called the *Dominie's Brieft*. The parson in Holland is designated *Dominie* So-and-so; and since they do not preach in certain fixed churches as with us, but turns about in the different churches of the city, it becomes necessary to issue a kind of *bill of fare* for the Sunday, that church-goers may know where to look for their favourite ecclesiastical dish. The nine Protestant bodies are the Netherlands Reformed Congregation,—that is to say, the State Church, though the State pays all Churches; the Lutheran Congregation; the Remonstrants, representing the old Arminianism; the Baptists; the Walloon Church; the English Presbyterians; the Scotch Church; the English Episcopal Church; and the German Evangelical Congregation. Some of these bodies, as the reader will readily guess, are only represented in the important commercial cities of the country. But it would be a mistake to interpret the existence of the others as hostile to the National Church in the sense in which Dissenting Churches are so here. They have not split off the original Establishment in an attitude of declared enmity; but are rather ancient varieties of Protestantism which have grown up side by side with it, in a rivalry not necessarily acrimonious. Indeed, the Remonstrants, from whom such an attitude was most reasonably to be expected, are on the best terms with the Church from which their

ancestors separated, and the clergy of the two associations interchange ministerial offices freely. The Remonstrant Congregations are small, but wealthy, and of good social rank and intelligence; nor is the old quarrel of Calvinist and Arminian (once so formidable even in its political consequences in the Netherlands) any longer a matter of discord and bitterness at this day.

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## DUTCH PRESBYTERIANISM.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, September 1863).

WHEN we said in our recent article on Holland that Calvinism and Arminianism were no longer sources of discord in the Dutch Church, we touched upon one of the most curious passages in the history of that country. In the seventeenth century, the theological question became a political one of the highest importance. The austerer forms of belief always attract the common people, for reasons which have been admirably pointed out by Adam Smith;\* and Arminianism was first welcomed by the cultivated and opulent classes of the cities, who constituted the strength of the Republican or States party, as opposed to the party of the Stadtholder. By a policy which, whatever else it was, was admirably shrewd, Prince Maurice of Nassau allied himself with the Calvinists, and the triumph of this combination between populace and prince produced,

\* *Wealth of Nations*, Book v., cap. 1, art. 3.

among other events, the exile of Grotius, and the execution of Barneveldt. But the singular result now is, that Arminianism has really revenged itself quietly in the long run. Calvinism is no longer a necessary characteristic of Dutch orthodoxy; and if a Remonstrant freely exchanges pulpits with the representative of his ancient persecutors, it is doubtless as much because there is no risk of conflicting doctrine, as because the age generally is more moderate in all such matters. This result may teach us that Presbyterianism is no necessary security for "sound Calvinism," as some people suppose; and the careful inquirer will find that in Holland,—where the Presbyterian form of Government passes unquestioned,—there is a freedom of theological speculation which England has never attained, and to which Scotland is totally a stranger.

If Calvinism and Arminianism, in fact, have ceased to be antagonistic there, the main cause is that questions still more serious have succeeded them. There are,—speaking roundly,—three parties in the Dutch Church, the Orthodox, or Biblical party; the Liberal party, and the party of the Modern Theology. The Orthodox men base themselves, of course, on the established traditions, modified as these are by the moral success of Arminianism. They have to resist Neology generally in all its shapes, and in its latest German garbs. They are strongest among the aristocracy, who regard their influence as conservative; among the women, who are always conservative in theology; and among the common people, as distinguished from the middle class, who respect their characters, and venerate the hereditary beliefs. The Orthodox clergy are dignified venerable old gentlemen, many of whom adhere



to the antique knee-breeches, and to the pipe, once the general mark of a pastor in Holland, but (in the levity of these modern times) now superseded, for the most part, by the cigar. The great seat of Orthodoxy is Utrecht. There are celebrated preachers, and some scholars, of the party, though it has recently shown signs of more weakness in literature than becomes it. The Liberals are chiefly influential in the middle class, and in the smaller towns. Their opinions have that vagueness which belongs to "Liberalism" everywhere, and they hold a half-and-half position between the Orthodox and the disciples of what is called the "Modern Theology" mentioned above. Leyden, the Batavian Athens, the famous University at which so many of our Scotch ancestors were educated, is the stronghold of the Modern Theology. This school draws its disciples from the young pastors, and represents the influence of German speculation on the Dutch mind. Hegel, Schleirmacher, Frederick Christian Baur, are the names held in honour by this section of Young Holland; and when we say that probably half the rising students of the Dutch Church belong to it, our readers may suppose that speculations which excite a kind of frenzied dismay here, are there received, discussed, and in large measure accepted, as mere matters of course. Thus, M. Ernest Renan's late book was translated into Dutch immediately, though there is yet no English version of it; and that, though French is much more widely known in Holland than in Great Britain. The difficulties of the Dutch Church turn, it will be seen, on central questions,—on the very essence of all that is involved in a religion based upon the Scriptures, and not on the social, semi-political, or



disciplinary questions which vex the Established Church of Scotland. There are signs that the higher difficulties will begin here, too, in their turn; but, meanwhile, the Dutch Church is free from some of the embarrassments of the Established Presbyterianism of the North.

For instance, the Patronage Question is by no means such a source of trouble in Holland as it is with us. The State abolished the *collation-regt* some time ago; and though it retains the power of approving the choice made of a *proponent*, or probationer, by the Consistory, that approval is almost entirely a matter of form. And so in the case of the few nobles who have a right to nominate; a leet is laid before them, but as a general rule they accept the Consistory's man. Again, it is of no small importance to the Dutch Church that Presbyterianism is the only recognised form of Protestantism in the country. Men of all ranks are Presbyterians, as a matter of course, noble or simple. And from this and other causes, a certain dignity and amenity attaches to the prevalent form of worship there, the absence of which is complained of in some Protestant countries. The old cathedrals, though not pretending to the splendour of those in the great Roman Catholic kingdoms, are wanting neither in decency of arrangement, nor in heirlooms of antiquity, nor in a grave beauty of ornamentation. In some, the pulpit stairs are carved with a curious grace, recalling the masterpieces of Grinling Gibbons. In some, there is painted glass, precious for its age, and more precious for its execution. In some, there are stately marble monuments to the memory of the mighty admirals who disputed with England the sovereignty of the sea. But what most attracts, and what

must often astonish the traveller from the North, is the noble organ music, which, in more than one church of the Netherlands, vies with anything of the kind in Europe. The organ of the Groote Kerk, the Cathedral of St Lawrence at Rotterdam, is at least eighty feet high, and has some pipes which are thirty feet long. That at Haarlem is of almost equal proportions, and is said to be still finer in tone. The use of the organ has been opposed at certain periods in Holland, but the national love of music has always succeeded in maintaining it, and it may be considered as universal. In fact, the organ supersedes the precentor, whose office it makes somewhat meaningless; and it exerts beyond doubt an admirable effect on the singing of the congregation. The musical notation of the psalm-tunes is ordinarily printed in the Dutch psalm-books, a detail which would alone suffice to prove the greater diffusion of musical knowledge among the people.

Amongst other features of Dutch Presbyterianism, we must not omit the observance of Sunday, which may be generally described not only as less strict than that prevailing in Scotland, but as in some respects less strict than that prevailing in London. A kind of theatre frequented by the lower orders is open on Sundays in Rotterdam; and if this is not the case at the Hague, it is less because such a thing would be forbidden by the authorities, than because it would not suit the domestic habits of the Dutch, who usually have family gatherings on Sunday evenings. The celebrated band of the Royal Guards plays in public on Sundays at the Hague during summer; and places of amusement, such as gardens attached to taverns, etc., are freely resorted to. The Dutch, however, are steady church-

goers, as we observed before; the shops are shut on the Sunday almost without exception; and if a Dutch Sunday is not kept like a Scotch one, it is at least more regarded than is common on many other parts of the Continent.

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## EDUCATION IN HOLLAND.

*(Edinburgh Courant, September 1863).*

THERE are few questions about Holland more interesting to a Scotsman than the state of the higher education there. It is a subject which at different periods has had a keen personal interest and importance for our countrymen. Not only had we Scottish Churches, still surviving, at Amsterdam and Rotterdam; not only had we a Scottish Guard in the service of the House of Orange, descendants of whom hold an honourable rank among Dutch families at this day, but it was quite common for our ancestors to go to the Dutch universities for an important part of their instruction. Lord Monboddo, for example, studied law at Groningen, and Lord Hailes at Utrecht. But the favourite university was the still more famous one of Leyden. Thanks to the courtesy which is so freely shown to foreign men of letters in the Netherlands, we had an opportunity of inspecting the "Album" of that illustrious seat of learning. We found a compatriot, Joannes Rose, *Scotus*, entered as a student of theology as early as 1594. But

the period when the Scottish names lay thickest, was from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century. Between 1727 and 1737, there were seven Campbells and ten Gordons studying there. The *Scotus* after the Union became *Scoto-Britannus*, and there he was in the Album, recognisable at a glance, a Maxwell, a M'Dowall, a Swinton, or what not. Dr Carlyle in 1745 found twenty-two British students at Leyden, and it claims the education of several of our most famous divines, including Macknight. The last edition of Buchanan was published by Burman there, ten years after the well-known Edinburgh edition of Ruddiman. This old relation of Scotland to the Continent was not without benefit in many ways. It enlarged the culture, and liberalised (by which we don't mean that it democratised, a very different process!) the characters of Scottish professional men; and retarded that provincialism which it is so hard for a small country, united to a great one with different institutions, to escape.

The University of Leyden is no longer resorted to, from so many different parts of Europe, as it formerly was. Nor does Europe hear so much of it as in the days when Henry the Fourth of France personally solicited Joseph Scaliger to accept one of its chairs. But it still holds a general and a local rank which justifies us in giving a few memoranda upon it as a typical place of Dutch education. It has still an average of six hundred students, and the Princes of Orange go there, as did their great kinsman Prince Maurice in the sixteenth century, while it was but a young institution. Among its recent and present professors, are men of European distinction. The venerable

Peerlkamp, now retired, is beyond all doubt one of the first Latin scholars and critics in Europe; and his "Horace," though little enough known or noticed in Scotland, produced an excitement in Germany which gave an entirely new impetus to the study of that delightful classic. The Greek professor, Charles Gabriel Cobet, at present Rector Magnificus of the University, is widely known as a shrewd, penetrating, most accomplished philologist, and respected on the spot as the honestest, if also one of the severest, of teachers. In conjunction with his colleague of the Theological Faculty, Kuenen, he edits a philological magazine, the *Mnemosyne*, in which questions of literary interest are discussed in the Latin language. Another of the Faculty of Theology, Scholten, is a leader of "advanced" opinions in his science, and has exercised an important influence on contemporary opinion. These are men of middle life, and in full activity; there being an excellent regulation by which every professor is required to give up active service, *rude donatus*, at seventy years of age. They are men, too, interested in all modern questions, and anything but destitute of modern attainments. Cobet will speak to a visitor in Latin, French, or Italian, as he may prefer; and will discuss Jules Janin with him, as readily as Plautus or Aristophanes. But Greek is his business, and he treats it as such; and an announcement that Cobet meant to hold forth on rope-dancing or the potato disease, would startle Leyden scarcely less than an overflow of the Rhine. From all this, the reader will guess that there is a wholesome veneration and admiration for their chief professors among the Leyden students, which is very pleasant to witness.

The vacation at Leyden is not so unreasonably long as



here. It begins in the first week of July, and ends in the last week of September. A professor's income is 2800 florins, about £230,—from the State,—and as much again from his fees. For some £500 a year, then, the Dutch, whose country is not a cheap one, be it remembered, to live in, get nine months' work from scholars of European distinction; a fact which makes certain complaints that we hear in this country appear sufficiently mean, ludicrous, and contemptible. And the work has this character, which some so-called scholars would consider alarming,—it is carried on through the medium of the Latin language. The lectures in Letters and Law are delivered in Latin, which, according to the ancient custom of the universities, is the official language of the institution. There is now before us a programme of the work of the coming session; the *Series Lectionum, in Academia Lugduno-Batava habendarum, post ferias Æstivas anni* 1863. It is there announced that Cobet will explain Plato, Demosthenes, and Homer, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, at ten o'clock; but the announcement is made, and will be carried out, wholly through the vehicle of the ancient tongue. The custom has many advantages. It secures that Leyden shall be a university, and not a mere school, much less a kind of superior Dame's school, to begin with; and it stamps a certain familiarity with the most important literary language of the world, on the minds of the students, for life.

The students enter, as may be gathered from this fact, when older than most of ours; at eighteen or nineteen years of age. There is no collegiate system as in England, but they live in lodgings, and mess together in messes of different size, at houses which make a business



of catering for them. The Leyden student is probably seldom so rich as many of the undergraduates of Oxford. But neither, on the other hand, is there the squalor amongst them which is complained of by friends of the students of Scotland. They have generally an allowance of from 1300 to 2000 florins, some £108 to £170 a year. Their social life is essentially civilised, and you are pretty sure to find in their chambers a piano and a Shakspeare. The duelling of the German universities is unknown there. The drink is comparatively innocuous, Rhine wine or Bavarian beer. A ramble or a drive to the villages through which poor Oliver Goldsmith trudged with his flute; some tippling of liqueurs in a suburban garden; a row on the canals; and a frequent consumption of cigars, very good and very cheap, constitute their favourite amusements. Every five years there is a masquerade, in which some scene from the much loved national history is worked up with taste and elaboration. At that time, Leyden bursts into a universal jollity; the jealousy between the student and the townsman is forgotten; and from all parts of Holland, men who have been educated at the old "Lugdunum Batavorum" come back to the haunts of their youth, and renew its gaiety and hilarity. The university life, in fact, permeates the nation, and helps to keep up that good patriotic and historical feeling which has been proof against so many enemies, and is still proof against those subtle foes, the spirits of cosmopolitanism, revolution, and centralisation.

## THE DUTCH CLERGY.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, September 1863).

OUR notes on Holland would be altogether incomplete, if they comprised nothing on the subject of the culture and social condition of the Dutch clergy. We may begin, then, by saying that they are drawn almost entirely from the middle classes. There are probably not half a dozen members of the aristocracy in the Dutch Church. The Dutch *noblesse* is found principally in the cavalry, or the navy, and plays no great part even in the politics of the country under the present system. Sir William Temple observed, two centuries ago, that the noble families of North and South Holland had been swept away by the Spanish war; and it is now, as then, in Friesland and Guelderland that they are chiefly to be looked for. How the abolition of primogeniture, and the general effect of that centralisation which Holland also owes to France, will ultimately affect the order, remains to be seen. Even during their student life, they are not on such friendly relations with the middle class as is happily the case in England. The Dutch Church, however, has little to offer to their ambition, apart from this. Positions of rank there are none; and the salaries of the clergy are anything but high. Seventeen hundred florins, about £140 a year, is a respectable stipend in Rotterdam. In Amsterdam, there are some which are better. But in country places, the pastor has often only his annual fifty. The Dutch, however, though frugal, are kindly, and

make their clergy many presents. The position, too, is thoroughly respectable, and they connect themselves in marriage with decent families. Probably a half, certainly a third, of them are sons of clergymen. And in literature, generally, they are stronger than might be expected from their pecuniary position. The philologists and men of letters of the country admit their respectability in this particular; and even the students most keen in "new views," the hardy young speculators against whom the village communes send up remonstrances to the authorities, don't complain that the party of resistance is ignorant or unlearned. Holland has always had too many classical scholars, her universities have kept up too high a standard, for the cant of an illiterate bigotry to get the upper hand there. When Mr Spurgeon was in Holland some time ago (on which occasion, by the way, he made one of his most creditable appearances in the Scotch Church of Rotterdam), he said something deprecating the necessity of clerical learning. But Leyden only laughed. It is not in the city which holds the bones of Joseph Scaliger that *that* kind of stuff goes down. Leyden can tolerate a heretic, but it expects him to be a scholar. Professor Scholten is said to be sufficiently "liberal," or "broad," or whatever else the right word is, in his views, and, by a natural law, his disciples are outstripping him in that direction. But Scholten writes a good Latin style, and has published a theological work in that language. Fancy asking one of the little clique which is called the Scotch "Liberal" or "Broad" Church to produce such a book! Why, they could no more do it, than Scholten as a Professor of Theology would stoop to puff Ernest Renan's "Life of Jesus"

anonymously in a newspaper! The "Liberal" of the Dutch Church will probably produce much trouble in that institution yet. But a Dutch "Liberal" fights his battle openly, and knows how to use his weapon. He *is* a scholar; and he is *not* a traitor or a sneak.

From what we have said, the reader will not be surprised to hear that two of the most popular Dutch poets are clergymen of the Dutch Church. One of these is Beets, author of the "Camera Obscura," who is a pastor at Utrecht. The other is Ten Kate, the translator of Dante and Milton, who is a pastor at Amsterdam. And here we may observe that the very isolation of the Dutch language in Europe forces Dutchmen to be more or less generally linguists. We all know how little Dutch has ever been studied in Great Britain. Lord Macaulay learned it, late in life, for a special historical purpose. Mr Buckle, that prodigy of industry, learned it during a residence at the Hague. But we confess we cannot add a third instance among our contemporaries to these two. The Dutch, in fact, are in pretty much the same position in which we Scots should have been, if we had continued to speak the language of Bishop Douglas and Sir David Lindsay. Accordingly, they are compelled to study more widely known tongues. Their scholars often retain the old facility of speaking Latin. Even their commercial classes speak French. And English and German are widely studied by their professional men. This fact alone is highly favourable to the culture of their clergy. But still more important is the rule that a student must pass his examination in classics and philosophy, before beginning his theological course. In Scotland, our only security is the

Presbyterial examination. But long before a Dutch student has got that length, he has been put through hands by a classical professor, has been tackled, say by Cobet, on such subjects as the Doric Dialect, and the Return of the Heracleidæ. Not till after he has proved a certain competency in letters, does he begin three or four years of theology. When he has passed the professorial examination in that, he preaches twice, what is called his *concio*, before a professor, on which occasion he invites his friends to hear his newly developed powers. Finally, after six or seven years of study, he is examined by the council of clergy of his province. He preaches before them once, and sustains an examination in four books of the Old Testament, and four books of the New. The students of Leyden are examined at Amsterdam, the Hague, Middelburgh (in Zealand), and Bois-le-Duc (in Brabant); those of Utrecht, at Utrecht, Arnheim, and Zwolle; those of Groningen, at Groningen, Leuwarden, and Assen. The examination is easier at Bois-le-Duc, or Middelburgh, than in the greater places; but we leave our readers to guess what chance their old friend the "Weem Probationer"\* would have had anywhere between Flushing and the farthest point of the Zuider Zee.

It is very much because the intellectual rank of the Netherlands clergy is so respectable, that we do not hear more of the Roman Catholic Church in their country. People are so accustomed to think Holland emphatically Protestant, as to forget that out of a population of 3,521,416, the Catholics number 1,220,087. There are whole villages of North and South Holland, the most famous and populous portions of the Netherlands, in which

\* See p. 200, for a curious exposure of the present state of clerical education in Scotland.



the peasantry have all along adhered to the ancient faith. There is a seminary for their priests a few miles from Leyden. But then it is so inferior to Leyden, that the Protestant faith retains its dignity, and has an intellectual pre-eminence which amply compensates for the tenacity of the boors to their hereditary creed. Nor is this intellectual respectability confined to the National Church. That Church is not plagued with bigoted and ignorant sects, hostile to its comfort on Radical grounds and from interested motives, and bringing the common Presbyterianism into contempt among the educated classes of the nation. The Remonstrants are strongest in the best portions of society; and the Walloon Church (to which Joseph Scaliger belonged, and which in spite of its Calvinistic traditions is conspicuously latitudinarian), has in Albert Réville a theologian of European celebrity. Such facts rather strengthen the National Church, by keeping up the character of Presbyterianism generally, than otherwise. Of course, the great difficulty of all is the widespread Rationalism or Neology to which allusion has been several times made. But this is a difficulty common to all Churches, and less mischievous in Churches which hold learning in honour than anywhere else. We are not aware that the Dutch Church can be charged with neglecting any of its practical and moral duties for the sake of that activity of speculation which belongs to its age and its contiguity to Germany. The charities of the country are enormous; its social life is pure; and while things are thus fundamentally healthy, it is vain to blame tendencies which are the legitimate results of the freedom of Protestantism, and of the toleration of which Holland was one of the first countries in Europe to set the example.



## GENERAL FEATURES OF DUTCH LIFE.

(*Edinburgh Courier*, September 1863).

FROM what we have said of the ecclesiastical affairs of Holland, our readers will have gathered that Presbyterianism has proved compatible there, with a resident monarchy and a friendly relation to the State; with the maintenance of good terms between the principal religious bodies; with a very fair culture among the clergy; and with a system of religious life and observances free from undue austerity or rigidity. On the other hand, we have shown that it has proved no security for the maintenance of Calvinistic orthodoxy, or, indeed, of orthodoxy of any kind whatever. We now proceed to give some notes on other features of Dutch life, illustrative of the practical working of the national institutions. We are somewhat puzzled by the admitted inferiority of the press of Holland. It is one of the oldest—perhaps it is the oldest—press in Europe. Our namesake the *Haarlem Courant* (in which family paper every well-regulated Dutch *pater-familias* takes care to announce his wife's lying in) has existed since 1650. But the Dutch newspapers are generally owned and edited by Jews. They have no literary merit or character; and in a well-educated country like Holland this is fatal to their influence among the better classes. A Dutch gentleman goes to his native journal for local news, but to a French one for intellectual entertainment. This is regretted by patriotic men, and some men of letters and

professors have tried to introduce a better state of things, though, hitherto, without success. Perhaps, however, this is the only social matter in which the Netherlands are conspicuously weak. They have excellent scholars and writers in Peerlkamp, Cobet, Backhuysen van dem Brink, Van Lennep, etc.; a good school of painters, comprising Israels, Meyer, Tieneman, and Kruseman van Elten; while Opzoomer, Scholten, and others keep alive the national repute for philosophy and theology. But in the less showy departments of life, Holland is particularly strong. The Infirmary at Rotterdam has been frequently visited by foreign deputations as a model of all that an infirmary ought to be. The other charitable institutions found everywhere, such as Orphan Asylums, Hospitals, Refuges, and so on, are worthy the honourable old fame of the country for such works. Sir William Temple, in his "Observations on the Netherlands"—(which is far his ablest book, by the way, and is in high esteem among the Dutch, who have naturalised it in their literature)—says "charity seems to be very national among them;" and Napoleon is said to have observed that the poor were better lodged there than his marshals. Large and frequent collections for charitable purposes are made in the Dutch Churches. And the general regard for cleanliness tells equally in favour of the humbler classes. Neither in Amsterdam, nor Rotterdam, nor the Hague, does one see so much dirt and squalor in proportion to the extent and population of these cities, as may be seen every day about the wynds and closes of Edinburgh; nor is any Dutch canal,—even in Amsterdam, where the canals are at their worst,—so offensive to the senses as the Water of Leith.

There are some lighter but not less characteristic particulars of the life of Holland from which we may derive instruction. The essential politeness of the people to strangers is at least equal to that of the French. The famous French politeness has in fact diminished, since the democratic spirit saturated the country; while America exhibits a brutality at which the gorge of civilised men rises. Now, though the social spirit of Holland,—her monarchy notwithstanding,—is essentially Republican, there is none of the rudeness commonly associated with Republicanism in her popular manners. Republicanism has indeed fallen unjustly into bad odour in modern Europe from its association with Democracy. It is a perfectly legitimate form of government in itself, and, under certain conditions, is compatible with order, excellent administration, and great prosperity and eminence both of public and private life. Holland did all her greatest things, produced all her greatest statesmen, writers, admirals, and painters, before the House of Orange acquired sovereignty, much as she owed from the first to the brilliant services done her by that great family. But, then, though she was a Republic, she was never a democratic Republic. In some respects, as Temple observes, she rather resembled an Oligarchy; and her De Wits and Barnaveldts were men of a higher social stamp, and a far higher culture, than the Lincolns and Sewards. Accordingly the Republican spirit recognisable even now has none of that low, levelling character, hostile to social and individual superiority, which is the peculiar mark of modern democracy. A gentleman finds himself treated with just as much regard and respect there, as if he were in Kent or Sussex; with more (we re-

great to add) than he meets in some parts in Scotland. This is the more welcome, because the Netherlands were undoubtedly much Gallicised by the French Revolution and Occupation. Those events profoundly modified their system of law, and established the centralisation in accordance with which they are now governed. Yet, thanks to the good Teutonic blood of the Dutch,—who, along with the Scandinavians, are certainly our nearest kinsmen on the Continent,—thanks to their obstinate nationality, and the comparative isolation caused by their peculiar language and life,—their social and domestic character has been wonderfully little Gallicised, all things considered. It is not so with the Belgians, whose social leanings are far more French, and whose capital we lately heard characteristically described by a Frenchwoman as “a little ape of Paris.” Young Belgium finds life in Holland “slow,” less brilliant, gay, luxurious, showy, than that of Brussels. But it is just that same love of cheap and glittering dissipation which is one of the obstacles to the establishment in France of political freedom, and of a healthy noble school of literature. Fortunately, the Belgians feel the dignity of an independent national existence, and have had in Leopold a king capable of making their monarchy respected. No really considerable party desires annexation to France amongst them. But so strong is the distrust of France among the smaller Powers, that Dutchmen are reconciled to the loss of Belgium, chiefly because it seems to keep France (so to speak) a step farther off. *Gallia amica sed non vicina*, France as a friend but not as a neighbour, was the favourite saying of an eminent statesman of the Netherlands. We trust it may long be popular there. And, meanwhile, we should

never forget ourselves, that *Gallia* would be far too *vicina* to *us* also, if she was allowed to seize Belgium; and we should familiarise ourselves with the resolution to support the independence of the whole Low Countries with all our strength, whenever it may become necessary.

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## JOHN GEORGE EDGAR.

(*Edinburgh Courier*, May 1864).

THERE died in London, on the 15th ult., a Scottish gentleman, whose services to the literature of this generation ought to preserve for him an honourable place in the memory of his countrymen. Mr Edgar had made peculiarly his own, and reigned with no rival though with many imitators, at the head of, one valuable branch of historical writing. He was unsurpassed as the author of histories for the young. By these we do not mean children's books, however valuable such may be in their way. We speak of narratives of great and serious transactions addressed to the well-educated youth of the country, at that important period of life when they first begin to relish history as distinct from fiction, and to think of the prominent men of the past with the love or hatred, the admiration or scorn, which go so far in forming their political opinions and sympathies as their minds ripen. Mr Edgar's superiority in hitting the exact tone in which such narratives should



be written, was shown in many books, in none more than in his "Wars of the Roses" and "Cavaliers and Roundheads;" and it was a superiority which could only be achieved by a fine nature as well as a fine mind. To speak successfully to the hearts of high-spirited lads while their enthusiasm and generosity were most fresh, this was not a task for which mere cleverness would have sufficed. The talent required, on the other hand, for the strictly literary part of the duty which Mr Edgar took upon himself is much more likely to be underrated than overrated by popular opinion. But a calm reader who is well acquainted with the ancient and modern masterpieces of history, will be the last man to fall into such a mistake. It is difficult in one way to write for boys, and difficult in another to write for men. Mr Edgar's books meet the double difficulty, and may be enjoyed by both. They are marked by a singularly clear perception and grasp of the body of facts to be dealt with: by the liveliest sense of whatever is instructive, graceful, noble, or picturesque in such facts; and the style is uniformly excellent. It is not a showy style; but it is singularly clear, masculine, and free from every trace of literary impurity or fashionable affectation. There is one Scotchman, as we all know, who stands on a pedestal by himself; but leaving Carlyle out of the question, it would be difficult to point to any Scotchman of letters whose prose is better than that of Mr Edgar. He had formed it by the long study of a few historical writers, especially Clarendon, Hume, and Scott; and the study was essentially one of love, rather than ambition. He had a natural passion for history as other men have for the lighter kinds of literature, or for the arts



and sciences ; but it was not a passion for history as a branch of letters, as a department of literary art. Any feeling he had of the last sort was secondary, and sprang out of his enthusiastic regard for the past ages, which it is the business of history to record. This enthusiasm was the key-note of his nature, both moral and intellectual ; and that he ever became a writer of historical books was rather an accident of life, the result of his persistent affection for the study of past ages, than the fruit of any fixed plan for the acquirement of literary reputation or position.

Mr Edgar died so young, and was so exclusively occupied with his favourite pursuits and amusements, that the mere events of his life are briefly told. He was born in 1827, and was the fourth son of the late Rev. John Edgar of Hutton, in Berwickshire, who represented, we believe, the ancient family of Edgar of Wedderlie, settled for ages in the parish of Westruther in that county. He was educated at Coldstream School, under a man of good local reputation, Mr Richard Henderson, and the Latin which he acquired there proved of great value to him afterwards, in reading the old mediæval chronicles. He went to a commercial situation in Liverpool in 1843 ; and in 1846 left Liverpool for the West Indies, where he remained till 1848. Returning to Liverpool in the last mentioned year, he resumed his Liverpool duties till 1852, when he settled in London. By this time his taste for reading and for questions of history and politics had overcome any attraction which commerce may once have had for him. A connection by marriage with the late worthy and intelligent Mr Bogue the publisher, another Berwickshire man, probably facilitated his entry into the Lon-

don world of literature, and in a few years he was well known to the younger generation there, and had commenced a career of successful industry in his favourite department of history. He contributed to several journals, but he was always rather a writer of books than a journalist. He studied his subjects for their own sake, and then made what literary use he could of them ; but he was little interested in the general pursuits of the literary world proper, and profoundly indifferent to the arts by which literary advancement is sometimes pursued there. Indeed his appearance in the modern metropolitan world of wags and cynics and tale-writers had something about it that was not only picturesque but unique. He came in among those clever, amusing, and essentially modern men like one of Scott's heroes. Profoundly attached to the feudal traditions,—a Tory of the purest Bolingbrokian School as distinct from the Pittite Tory or modern Conservative, and supporting these doctrines with a fearless and eccentric eloquence, to which his fine person and frank and gallant address gave at once an easy and a stately charm,—he represented in London the Scot of a past age. The ordinary Cockney writer looked with astonishment on a man who was as familiar with Matthew Paris and Froissart, and the Paston Letters, as he himself with Dumas or Dickens ; and who had a veneration for the houses of Home or Stanley, which the Cockney rarely retains even for his grandfather and grandmother. But the best men of the London school, and especially the men of culture and aspiration, looked on him with affection ; and it was impossible for anybody seriously to dislike him. He was so cordial and

genial, so faithful in friendship, and so pleasant in the unbendings of social life, that differences of opinion vanished before his laugh. As years went on, his books became better and better known. He began to conquer the modesty and distrust of self which made him shrink from undertaking works of more pretension than those which he had begun. Latterly he published some historical fictions, of which "How I won my Spurs" is perhaps the best; and he made serious preparations for a book on the Barons' Wars, in which he was to take the side of the English monarchy, and which certainly would have exhibited admirable knowledge, and talents for investigation and description that must have commanded an attention which his previous performances had been too modest even to desire to invite. In the midst of these projects, inchoate and incomplete, death has overtaken him. He had a splendid constitution, on which he presumed too much, and which he thought would fight him through anything. So after a bout of solitary literary labour, during which he had lived *more suo* upon tea and tobacco, he was attacked with brain fever in the first week of April. He would not believe it serious, nor would he send for advice, till at last he became delirious, and it was too late. His brother, Andrew Edgar, Esq., of the English bar, found him hardly able to recognise his nearest relatives about the 13th, and he died on the 15th, in the evening. He was attended to his grave in Highgate Cemetery on the 19th inst.; and so passed away from the sight of his friends, a brilliant, gallant, and most generous gentleman, who was admired by all who had carefully read his books, and loved by all who had carefully studied his character.

## FREE CHURCH PRETENSIONS.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, May 1864).

IN addressing the General Assembly of the Free Church on Tuesday,\* Dr Buchanan reminded them that their Church had now attained its majority ; and he liberally offered himself to be roasted whole by the public on the occasion. The way in which he achieved this was by proceeding to exalt his own denomination in a ridiculous manner, at the expense of all other Churches. The Doctor is not a bad speaker. His English is more respectable than we are accustomed to from such quarters ; and if he has hitherto given no proofs of scholarship, that is probably because he wishes to remain intelligible to the mass of his brethren. We have no fault to find with him, except defensively ; but when he tells us that the Free Church is pure, and blooming, and prosperous, to the exclusion of all possible Establishments, he inevitably provokes, at this ecclesiastical time of the year, a little free and candid criticism.

Dr Buchanan, we see, still adheres to a pretension which the new relations of his Church to other dissenters is every day making more and more obsolete. He would still have the world to believe that *his* Church is *the* Church, that in 1843 the Church itself seceded from the State, and not merely one powerful party in the Church from the Church. "Let me ask the Assembly," he says, "to advert to the grand peculiarity by which all along our Church has been

\* May 24.

distinguished from all other Nonconformist Churches in the kingdom, I might even say in the world. Of all such Churches, ours is the only one that ever undertook, or was ever called on to undertake, a really national work. . . . Its separation from the State was *a strictly corporate act*." This kind of claim, so far from being new, is one of the oldest known. "A peculiar people," was the pet phrase which the English Dissenters of the seventeenth century always applied to themselves; and all our Scotch secessions have professed in their turn to represent the real true-blue old Presbyterianism of the nation. In order, therefore, to prove that his particular sect differed from these, except in degree, Dr Buchanan should have condescended to figures, and shown that the Church of 1843 voted itself (so to speak) out of itself, by a genuine majority. But unfortunately for the Doctor, the statistics are in the way of his doing anything of the kind. The secession was a large secession, but it was no more. The whole number of members of the General Assembly for 1843 was 456. The Free Church had only 193 of these, —73 of whom were elders, and 31 chapel ministers. In the country at large, the figures were still less favourable to Dr Buchanan's assumption. Of 1203 clergymen in the Church of Scotland, 752 adhered to the Church, while of those who went out, 162 were *quoad sacra* ministers. All this is matter of mere arithmetic, easily accessible to anybody who likes. But it is pleasant to be able to apply plain intelligible tests to the vague assertions of interested declaimers. The withdrawal of a minority, however big, does not destroy the unity of a corporate body. If the Radicals of the present Town Council walked out some



day, and refused to act, it would still be the Town Council. If thirty or forty regiments of the line mutinied, the remainder would still form the British army. Mr Banting is still Mr Banting, though he has lost considerable bulk by persevering in his now well-known regimen. The Free Church is only national in the sense in which whisky-drinking is national. There are a number of people attached to it in every county; but the nation has not by any formal act, *qua* a nation, adopted it as an institution. What Dr Buchanan takes for corporate unity is only numerical agglomeration. The respectable amount of the numbers is nothing to the point for his purpose. And even that consideration itself becomes much less important when we remember that the movement was not a movement of the educated classes; and that to this day, the Free Church is still (as Dr Buchanan incautiously reminds us) most powerful in the wildest, remotest, and most ignorant districts of the country,—districts from which nothing of what is greatest in its historical life has come,—neither governing nor reforming elements,—neither philosophy, nor literature, nor industrial and scientific invention.

It is more to the purpose what Dr Buchanan tells us of the growth and success of the Sustentation Fund. The general fact of its increase he puts clearly and well. But he passes lightly over its difficulties and inequalities, and evades the one fatal fact that no sum which ecclesiastical engineering can raise out of the congregations avails to tempt a competent class of students. The Candlerghies and Guthries are handsomely enough paid; and in the long run, they are sure of a testimonial,—a piece of luck now, we believe, in preparation for Dr Guthrie, who will care-



fully look the other way while it is being got ready, as Mrs Gamp did while the rum and water were being mixed for her at Mr Mould's. But the average income of Free Church country ministers is scarcely more than L.130; and it is notorious that in order to raise lads who will put up with such a prospect for life, it has been proposed to recruit among the shop-boys. The whole sum raised for the Fund looks great, but we must measure its greatness by the work it has to do. Dr Buchanan can hardly believe a shop-boy ministry, educated in the evenings, likely to be of much effect in the controversies of a period like the present; but if he says they are good enough for their pastoral work, then he admits that his Church is, after all, only a useful sect for the inferior classes. And this is contrary to the whole theory of his speech, which was that his Church was an adequate organ for the religious instruction of the "nation."

Dr Buchanan seems to view with as much complacency as Cardinal Wiseman the difficulties of the Churches of England and Scotland; and thinks the age of endowments is passing away. Their doctrinal difficulties, however, are common to all Churches, being produced by the aspect of modern literature and science, and have nothing to do with their relation to the State. They are felt in the Presbyterian Churches of Holland and France, in the Lutheran Churches of Sweden and Germany, and in the Roman Catholic Church itself; and their solution is quite a separate question from that between Voluntaryism and Establishments. People forget that a Church may be free from such difficulties by being *below* the region in which they arise; but better, after all, culture, speculation, in-

quity, *and* difficulties, than the jog-trot routine of an ignorant peacefulness. Meanwhile, politically and socially, the Church of England is as strong as ever she was, stronger than she was a generation ago. Every distinct attack on her is defeated in the House of Commons; and even the complaint that literates are crowding her portals is an exaggerated one, as any careful reader of the ordination lists will learn. With regard to the Scotch Establishment, she is in an infinitely better position than Dr Buchanan must once have expected to see her in; and, unable to meet such facts as the success of her Endowment Scheme, or her undoubted missionary and educational energy, he is reduced to taunts which are merely nonsensical: "The yoke of Lord Aberdeen's Bill sits uneasily on its galled neck; and those strange indications we have seen in certain quarters, to seek security in some sort of alliance with the prelatie Church of England, betray a sense of insecurity which time is more likely to increase than to diminish." This is really unworthy of a man of Dr Buchanan's brains. Why, even the brisk, half-lettered, saucy, underbred agitator, who is most notorious for his zeal in the cause of forms of worship parodying those of the Church of England, professes that he advocates them to prevent defections to what Dr Buchanan calls Prelacy. The temporary conspicuousness of such men proves nothing against the Church of Scotland, which at once treats them with reasonable toleration, and declines to commit itself to their immature and weakly ambitious schemes.

## CHANGES OF NAME AND SURNAME.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, August 1862).

A GOOD deal of discussion has been excited lately by the increasing prevalence of a tendency to innovation in the matter of family names. One case of the sort was brought before Parliament towards the close of the session, in which a Welsh gentleman had got into a squabble with a peer, by changing his surname to Herbert. At that time it was laid down by men of position, and not satisfactorily refuted, that everybody has a right to change his name if he pleases; that, of course, the most dignified way of doing so is to get formal permission, and have it gazetted, but that, in any case, the change is legal, and must be accepted by society if it is regularly carried out in common usage. Soon after this discussion, its effects became apparent. One "Joshua Bugg," in the southern counties of England, advertised in the *Times* that he meant in future to call himself "Norfolk Howard." Other persons followed this example, and effected metamorphoses more remarkable than any recorded by Ovid. The latest we have seen made public was not of this kind, but was a notice that the old Lancashire Hoghtons of Hoghton Tower were about to resume the *De Hoghton* of their feudal predecessors. The whole tendency seems to us one which society ought to discourage, and the existence of which is a sign of the degeneracy and vulgarity of modern taste.

Perhaps the best condemnation of the set of feeling in

such directions is, that it is strongly *American* in character. Mr Dickens told us, long ago, in the "American Notes," that young American women in large numbers took new Christian names every year. Of course, their motive was to get rid of such common baptismal names as Mary, Elizabeth, or Martha, which are only the names of saints and heroines, and to bloom out in the finery of Angelina, Violetta, and so forth, the "heroines" not of history, but of novels. Even this less objectionable hunger for innovation in the matter of Christian names is getting too strong amongst ourselves. The good old Scotch rule (which was also, by the way, the Greek rule) of calling your eldest son after your father, is on the wane; and that prevalence of particular names which gave so much local colour to our districts, and kept alive the ties of blood and of tradition, is dying out. This takes place in families of all classes. Young M'Toddy is no longer Sandy M'Toddy, like his grandfather the provincial Bailie. He has become Mortimer M'Toddy, and his intimates in the Parliament House always call him Mortimer, a title which, in the extremely improbable case of his attaining the Bench, he will assuredly assume in preference to his patronymic. But the taking of such names, as Christian, or as second ones, though in strictness they ought not to be taken where there is no hereditary reason, will always be more or less general. The vanity of mankind is too deeply rooted to be interfered with, *there*; and where euphony is served by such additions, and the public ear gratified by them, he would be a harsh critic who should treat them harshly. Certain classes of the community are even tacitly allowed great freedom in such matters. Actors, for in-

stance, habitually do with their names what they please. They add to them, alter them, or change them altogether; and the Jack Delamere of an actor's daily life is often as purely fictitious as the Hamlet or Horatio which he bears in the evening. In the literary world too, since the light literature man became so prominent, something of the same kind has taken place. William Snooks, for instance, is commonplace, and Bill Snooks vulgar. But Stanley Snooks at the head of an article, or on a yellow cover, has a certain pleasant aristocratic levity, and yet compactness, about it. This kind of taste, we say, is as old as the hills; as old as Aristophanes at any rate; for a man in one of the plays says that his wife *would* make him give their son a name, "with a *hippos* in it."

But when the inclination in question goes so far as to induce people to adopt new surnames, and make them hereditary, that is quite another thing. It may be convenient that such a change should be recognised, so that the law may deal with the parties under their new appellation. If Podger, as Plantagenet, steals a goose, let him be indicted as Plantagenet by all means, if he was known in the district where he offended by that name. But to encourage people in adopting, for merely fantastic reasons, other names than their hereditary ones, is absurd. A man's surname, next to his skin, to which Goethe, in his "Autobiography," well likens it, is the most individual and characteristic thing about him. It is no mere cloak, as Goethe there says, to be taken on and off according to pleasure. For instance, it indicates, speaking broadly, his nationality, his ethnology, the part of the country he came from, all which are circumstances determining his type of



character and constitution. In noble families, for instance, it is infinitely more important than the mere title. The title may have been carried by half-a-dozen houses, and may have been selected by the present house for reasons purely arbitrary. But the gentile name of the family is what connects them with history in the truest sense; under it, if they got their title honourably, their honours were won. And here, we may observe, that some of our noble families have set a bad example,—we don't mean by changing their surnames, but by reverting to remote and early forms of them. All the historic distinction of the Seymours, for instance, gathers round the name of Seymour. Why disguise it under the archaic form of St Maur? Or why should the Burkes call themselves De Burgh? The effect of such innovations is to give the impression that these families are ashamed of being Englishmen or Irishmen. Yet we know that the descendants of the Normans called themselves Englishmen in a very few generations; that they became ultra-English against the French, in England, and ultra-Scots against the English, in Scotland. What should we say to Lord Elgin if he wrote himself “Brus?” The true theory of a nobility is to be, not distinct from the people, but the leading portion of the people itself. To resume the “*de*” again, once universal, and dropped by universal consent, is equally wrong in theory and bad in taste. It is a practical anachronism.

And just as much an anachronism of a different kind is the assuming of distinguished surnames by persons dissatisfied with their own. This is the worst feature of the innovation under review, not so much that Bugg is not content to be Bugg, as that he will insist on being Howard.



Once men did adopt such surnames, and shared the protection in return for swelling the following of great families. But this was only under particular conditions of society, and in far distant ages. Society is settled now. Surnames are fixed and determined, and carry historical meanings and associations along with them. If a man will get rid of that which he inherits, let him show some ingenuity about that which he adopts. When Mr Disraeli's Sephardim ancestors were persecuted out of Spain, they formed in Italy a new surname for themselves, and have made it illustrious. But to seize an illustrious name ready made is quite another thing. Before a man does this, let him remember that he may disgrace it. And let him reflect that it is the fault of his own family if their name be still ignoble. These are questions of association in great measure. Hallow the vulgar name by genius, or valour, or piety, and it will cease to be vulgar. If the race is good, the name will make itself respectable; if it is not good, a great name will not elevate it. Vainly does Caudle, under the influence of new wealth, transform himself, *nominally*, into Clifford. The great old surname sits on him like a coat made for some other man. Nobody meeting him thinks of Wordsworth's "Shepherd Lord." Nobody seeing Mrs C. wafts a sigh to the memory of Fair Rosamond!

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### THE JEALOUS LORD.

Lord Booby hates Disraeli ;—stop a bit ;  
His principles ? What then ? He hates his wit !

## TOM DUNCOMBE.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, November 1861).

THERE is always a certain sentimental interest in contemplating the last of any breed or class, whether of man or other animals. This is the charm of the Dodo to a scientific mind; and how largely fiction has profited by it we know from the cases of the Mohicans, and the Tribunes, and ever so many other examples. A philosophical politician has just at present an opportunity of feeling the full force of the kind of melancholy curiosity of which we speak. There is a vacancy in Finsbury. A once celebrated M.P. has passed away. "Tom Duncombe,"—the last of the Radical gentlemen,—is dead.

Of course, there are many decent Radical borough members to whom the title in question is given by the usual courtesy of the age. "Gentlemen," says an Elizabethan lawyer, "be made right cheap in this kingdom." But this is not what we mean. Tom Duncombe was a man of fashion and connections, a dandy, a dragoon, a rake; and he combined with these advantages a profession of ultra-politics, which (aided by very good brains) secured him a free seat in Parliament, and a certain distinction through life. The social position would not have done it alone, nor the good brains and the ultra-politics. But, coming together, they were irresistible, and in Finsbury, change what might, Duncombe was safe. The stolid but not ungenial Radical ten-pounder listened with delight to

a lord's brother advocating changes which would have swamped all lords together; and swore that "Tom," in addition to being a gentleman, was a trump. The very fact that the idol's private reputation was a little queer and rakish was in his favour with the kind of man who is potent in Finsbury elections. The morals of the Regency gave a piquancy in *his* eyes to the politics of White Conduit House. If "Tom's" name was mixed up in public gossip with that of the most famous *hetæraæ* of the day, why this was a kind of distinction. Finsbury liked an amount of moral deterioration which seasoned the character as mouldiness does cheese. In Scotland, a rake turned politician has to rub out the spots from his character with a little cant for grease. But Finsbury made no such demands on Duncombe any more than old Rome did on Clodius. There was, indeed, a classical air about the whole business; and Clodius if he pleased might destroy his own constitution so long as he was always ready to join in destroying that of the country. We have observed this ancient connection between an easy view of morals and an extreme view of politics to be as natural to men of rank now as in the Clodius and Catiline times. A grandee, let us suppose, scandalises the county, and shuts up his castle from the county society, by placing an unrecognisable person at the head of his table. The sons in this case usually enter into public life on high-flying popular principles. It makes up to them for the want of support from their own class, and revenges them on those of their equals who have given them the cold shoulder. And, as politicians, they get at once the advantages of patrician connection and of Radical politics. Their birth gives them an

advantage over the local sugar-broker, their opinions over the country gentry. The Radical's private and secret passion for a lord is often doomed to languish ungratified by the lord's political coyness. His lordship cannot make up his mind to declare against his own order; the Rad. has a dread of "Toryism," such as a man feels in this cold weather for the wholesome matutinal tub. But when the lord is a Radical too, then, indeed, Podger's heart yearns towards him,—

“ ——— tenuis sub artus,  
Flamma dimanat.”

—and he rushes with ill-concealed partiality into his embrace.

Such was the feeling of Finsbury towards the young Duncombe at a period now beginning to look very distant. We do not say that *his* individual position was that of one of the group of sons of an irregular old grandee sketched above. But we mean that his birth, his dandyism, and even his “gay” reputation, were items in his success, and that his success was essentially that of a Radical gentleman. Probably we shall do him no injustice by supposing that he was fully sensible of the advantages of the combination. Yet we are willing to believe that often when he rounded a period against restrictions on the suffrage, he consoled himself by reflecting that he was impotent to destroy them. And, indeed, it is a curious thought that he leaves the world more Conservative than he can almost ever have remembered to see it. He entered public life just when the Whigs were making up their minds to head the revolutionary tendency and seize its profits. He swam by always taking care to be on the topmost and most

advancing wave of agitation; and he contrived to keep afloat in the calm as in the storm. But, latterly, he was living on his political capital; sucking in a political winter the paws of his *prétexte*; allowed to retain his seat because it was certain that nature would not allow him to retain it long. If he was ever sincere, heart and soul, in his Ballot and other cries, he must have deplored the apathy of the new generation, and wondered how ineffectual his demagogism had, on the whole, been. But we may safely assume that "Tom" always put the most violent side of his real politics forward; that he was quite as content to be returned by Finsbury sober as by Finsbury drunk, provided that wonderful borough *did* return him. And we can fancy him reflecting at last with the Emperor Augustus, after unbroken success in his main object, that he had well played out the Comedy of Life.

We must now guard ourselves from seeming to under-rate his talents, which were quite superior to those of demagogues in general. Not only had he a clever effective gift of oratory, but he had a kind of pluck and of humour which belonged to his generation rather than to ours. The young politician of our day is not only as grave as a nun, but is apt to cant atrociously, and to flavour his oratory after the fashion of Mr Pecksniff and Mr Chadband. The very humbug of Duncombe's generation had a heartier and healthier air, and they were on the whole less apt to toady individuals or the public. There was a spice of satire in Duncombe's speeches which kept the hearer awake like a pinch of snuff. Our popular speakers distribute neat little philanthropical sentiments to their audience as tame and tasteless as charity-children's buns.



The sort of talent required for a Radical gentleman is more often found in the class to which Duncombe belonged than in the men who shine, like Cobden and Bright, by dint of hardheaded sense and violent declamation. And as the popular taste runs now in favour of rough business-like brains, this fact tells against the species of which we have been treating. Bernal Osborne, for example, who is a variety of the species, is turning out a comparative failure, and has abandoned all its distinctive features. But there are other equally important circumstances to be remembered. The Whigs were responsible for the existence of many Radical gentlemen in former times, having driven them into Radicalism by their oligarchical exclusiveness. This explains the so-called Radicalism of a man like Sir William Molesworth, who assuredly was never a Democrat, or he would hardly have edited the absolutist Hobbes. Again, what we will freely call the Fogysm of some Tories of the old *régime* also drove into what was loosely styled Radicalism, men who were, like Sir Francis Burdett, thoroughly aristocratic at heart. Some of these men, strange to say, became Radicals by dint of sheer feudal feeling, by looking on the Castle-reaghs, Sidmouths, and Eldons, as a set of upstarts; much as, under the early Hanover Kings, some of the Jacobites took to talking a kind of Republicanism. But there is now no longer an excuse for these anomalies. The Whigs are so feeble, considered as Whigs, that they *must* take in private gentlemen of good family, however anxious they may be to confine their Ministries to Russells, Cavendishes, and Howards. And the Tories are in harmony with the most advanced thought of the age, besides being led by

the very first noble of the kingdom. There is therefore less excuse for a gentleman's becoming a demagogue than in Duncombe's young days; and the "Paphlagonian" and the "Sausage-seller" may be left to fight the rivalry for the position out, as in the comedy of Aristophanes. We can hardly fancy anything more likely to have a good effect on the people than such a spectacle. And the talent once expended by better men in Radicalism may be more usefully employed in social improvement, in useful administration, in teaching the people the historic bases and origin of our liberties and greatness, and in cultivating their respect and affection by honest arts.

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### HOW TO WRITE A BIOGRAPHY.

Take your facts from the last man ;—let no theft appal ye;  
Then, take thought from Carlyle, and take style from  
Macaulay;  
Throw in plenty of "sympathy,"—rubbing your eyes  
about  
Men whom, if living, you'd snub and tell lies about :  
Pass the word to the critics, and fling your pen down,  
And your bran-new biography's out on the town.

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### BLOGG ON FAMILY.

Blogg sneers at ancient birth ;—yes, Blogg, we see,  
Your ears are longer than your pedigree.

## THALATTA.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, January 1863).

WHEN the last number of this Romance appeared in *Fraser*, we pronounced it a "showy failure," and we hold the same opinion, even more strongly, now that it is all before us at once, in a volume. The reason why the failure should be signal, lies on the surface. To paint the life and character of a Prime Minister, with all the political and social accessories belonging to such a career, demands a knowledge of politics and the great world, to begin with, of which the author of "Thalatta" is altogether destitute. He has, obviously, about as much personal acquaintance with such worlds as a U. P. minister of Auchterarder has with the domestic life of the Pope. No doubt, this ignorance would not prevent a writer of genius from succeeding so far as to produce something brilliant and amusing even while untrue. "Vivian Grey" is capital reading, though Disraeli then wanted the experience of life which has made his later novels so much more valuable. But middle-aged mediocrity is quite a different thing from boyish genius. The author of "Thalatta" is a shrewd, tolerably clever man, well read in the literature of the day; but the nearest approach to genius in him is a certain sensibility to the creations of superior minds, and liveliness of mimetic faculty, which, together, make him occasionally catch the

\* *Thalatta! or, the Great Commoner; A Political Romance.* London.

tone of his betters rather happily. The influence of the last powerful mind which has impressed him, is seen reflected in his pages like the moon in a pail of water. But there is no originality of thought or feeling, no evidence of inherent and inborn pith and strength, about his book. The reader finds himself in a world of echoes, hearing now a note of Kingsley, now a note of Tennyson, sometimes a faint reverberation of Carlyle's loud melancholy scorn, or Thackeray's thoughtfully-playful irony. The village blacksmith who went up a tree, and whistled, sometimes like a thrush and sometimes like a nightingale, played the same trick on the neighbourhood which cleverish men of this numerous class do. But, unfortunately, there are worse things about "Thalatta" than the general second-hand air of thought and sentiment which everybody widely read in the literature of this age must recognise. The book contains some direct plagiarisms; much sham classicism; not a little looseness of style and quotation; and (we regret to add) a considerable sprinkling of snobism, affectation, and personal spite.

In the very first chapter, we have a family history of the Warrenders, intended to show how the qualities of Scandinavian blood may exist permanently in a family, taking different forms of expression in different ages. The whole view comes from a novel called "Eustace Conyers," of which most of our readers probably never heard, but which ought not to be plundered for all that. Plagiarisms even of detail could easily be pointed out. But, indeed, the general Conservatism of "Thalatta" (as far as it is Conservative) is one entire plagiarism, cribbed as neatly as the writer cribs a joke. To apply Carlyle's doctrine of

Hero-Worship to feudal institutions, and to show their modern adaptability, strengthened by classical example and illustration, such a conception never grew in the author of "Thalatta's" brain; and having borrowed it without gratitude, he employs it without dexterity. The following passage, for example, shows that he does not know what he is talking about, and is calculated to do Conservatism a great deal of harm:—

## MEN AND MEASURES.

"And so, musing upon fate, upon the doom which haunts a fated house, by the shores of the Northern Sea as by the sleepless Cephissus, in the fisher's hovel as in the palace of the King—I prepare at length to lay aside my pen. But this is a book on politics, you say; and you think therefore that it might be advisable to point the moral which it enforces. But it points to nothing, neither to the legerdmain of Whig, or Tory, or Radical. It is a *man* we want, not legislative antidotes. All history has proved, all true religion has asserted, that the form is worthless if the spirit be dead. Christendom is the life of Christ. The life of a Divine Person, and not the dogmas of priests, lies at the root of all the truth, and goodness, and greatness of eighteen hundred years. Whatever is most characteristic in the life of any nation is due to the influence of some half-dozen men, whose high deeds or thoughts inspired the race, thereby raising it out of itself, out of its savageness, and its meanness, and its selfishness, to the level of sacrifice, and to the sense of duty. *I have no confidence in measures—I believe in men. Mowbray was the last of the men who were greater than their measures.* He did not enfranchise the ten-pounders, but he stirred the imagination and wakened the faith of the nation. Had he lived, the ten-pounders might not have been enfranchised. The people would have been satisfied to be led by one in whom they recognised a chief, a guide, a leader.



They would not have required to be saved by an ingenious piece of mechanism. But he died; and as the Whigs, who cultivate 'Houses' instead of 'Men,' succeeded to the Government, and had neither personal genius nor lofty virtue to offer to the people, they were forced to try the ten-pound experiment. Whether it has worked well, I do not stay to inquire. Upon the whole, I am inclined to agree with Darcy, who once said—

" 'There *must* be a Divine Governor of the world. Else into what a mess we should get when Lord John, for instance, is at the helm. And as long as there is a Divine Leader, it does not, perhaps, matter very much *who* is Prime Minister.' "

It positively never enters into the writer's head that we chiefly want "men" because they bring good "measures" along with them. The common mistake lies not in overvaluing "measures," but in expecting good ones as readily from a little man as a great man. "Darcy's" joke in the last paragraph we have met with in a novel before. "Do you believe in Peel?" asks one of the characters. "Chiefly in Providence," is the reply. Such pleasantries, like the gushing rhapsodies of other parts of "*Thalatta*," are only excusable in lively lads of two-and-twenty. The author of "*Thalatta*" is far too practised an imitator to be able to use *that* plea. And Mazeppa loses his poetry at Astley's.

With regard to what the *Saturday Review*—cruelly ironical—called the "enormous classical learning" of this gentleman, we think it worthy of particular notice. Its highest praise is that "*pallida mors*," "*mens sana in corpore sano*," and "*loquaces lymphæ tuæ*—O famed Bandusian well!"—are all rightly spelt on the same page; and this is not only satisfactory, but encouraging, and should rouse in our "literary men" here a spirit of emula-

tion. We are puzzled, however, by the following flash of scholarship :—

“For this was the twelfth of August (*DIES IMMEMOR*), and Miles Warrender and an old college chum were taking their pleasure on his moors.”

Does this mean, that grouse-shooting day is a day forgetful and unmindful of other days? But that is not sense. Does it mean, that it is a day never to be forgotten itself? But that is not Latin. On the whole, we fear, the author's notions about the right use of *immemor* are loose, and we wonder what he makes of it in our friend of the “famed Bandusian well.” It does not follow, however, now-a-days, because a man does not know the classical languages, that he may not do the “classical business” in the style of the subjoined :—

“With ruffled plumage the kingly bird nestles in the unwary breast of Hermione. Apollo strings his lyre beside the bank of the Amphrysus, and night after night, upon old Latmos, Diana stoops to kiss the dead Endymion. Here the smiling Hebe fills with flowing nectar the cup of an enamoured god; and Bacchus, flushed with the grape-juice and crowned with the vine-leaf, springs lightly from his chariot,

‘ ————while his eye

Makes Ariadne's cheek look blushinglly.’

Death itself is changed by the magic pencil into an influence graceful and endearing. Hyacinthus forsakes not the beautiful world, and the pleasant sunshine that he loves; but, as a delicate flower, still communes with the god. The melancholy tree is charged with the drooping spirit of Cyparissus; and in the feathered anemone Adonais blooms into a purer and gentler life. But now bow down, bow down; for lo! Aphrodite in her

immortal girlhood woos young Anchises among the sheep-cots on Ida—Ida, that looks down on windy Troy!"

Though written in all seriousness, this reads like the burlesques of Bulwer in "Punch's Prize Novelists;" and we have had nothing like it, in Edinburgh, since the "Poems by a Painter."

Generalities of this kind at third and fourth hand, and spoony declamations about the "blue Ægean" from fellows who never inhaled a bréeze scented by the lemon groves of Poros, or drank Tenedos wine, mulled, under the shadow of old Athos, are fashionable in our light literature just now. They are found to be easy, and they are thought to be safe. Yet, they are by no means without their dangers. Thus, how fine it sounds to close a chapter with the sonorous reflection that "the nicknames of Aristophanes have outlasted the Phidian Zeus!" The worst of it is, that Aristophanes did not produce his great satirical effects by nicknames, but by the dramatic portraiture of real living persons brought on the stage under their proper appellations. It is in this way that Socrates figures in the "Clouds;" Lamachus in the "Acharnians;" Cleon, very slightly disguised, in the "Knights;" and to characterise the Athenian satirist as distinctively great in "nicknames" is to mislead the innocent public. Perhaps the author of "Thalatta" exhausted his Greek on his title-page.

The reader can now understand why this literary gentleman is so angry with "*Classical Editors*." Nobody has more to fear from them; and for our parts, we think his satire on the subject (barring a few fibs which nothing can justify), both natural and excusable. But we object, on constitutional grounds, to its being put into the mouth of

a British peer. A certain "Lord Maurice" is brought in at a certain "Lord Windermere's," saying just the same things about an "Editor," that Tom M'Cad, advocate, says to his friend Dr M'Stotty, about a critic who occasionally exposes the ignorance and laughs at the puffery of the couple. We object, as Conservatives, to British noblemen being employed in such undignified work. Or, rather, we object altogether to this writer's despotic way of creating peers and potentates generally. It is fair enough to magnify Tom's day's shooting by the leave of the factor, into the possession of an immense moor of his own, or to promote his little cutter into a yacht. But neither M'Cad nor M'Stotty should be elevated to the Upper House; nor should "basely plebeian names" be talked of so glibly by their friend and equal. The author of "Thalatta's" real well-wishers will advise him to cut the miserable school of Theodore Hook, which did so much harm to the cause of Conservatism, and to cultivate his better qualities. He has fair abilities of a plain kind; a good eye for nature; and apparently a genuine love of at least all that literature which can be come by pretty easily. On this foundation, something very respectable may be built by dint of study, and thought, and a rigid extirpation of the various weaknesses belonging to literary dandyism and sentimentalism, or absurd social pretension. It is because "Thalatta" is so unluckily full-blown a specimen of some of the worst aspects of the literature of the day that we have bestowed so much attention upon it. And if the author has the amount of common sense which he gives indications of in his better moods, he will put our criticism to the right use. But whether he does so or not is his own affair.

## SCOTTISH CLERICAL EDUCATION.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, May 1863).

A CASE was brought before the General Assembly of the Church on Saturday† which illustrates with curious and painful felicity much that has been said on the subject of clerical education in the *Courant*. It seems that last February one Mr John Anderson, a student of divinity, appeared before the Presbytery of Weem for examination. He had "finished his course at the University;" he had "attended the Divinity Hall for three full sessions;" and it only remained that the Presbytery should examine him before he became authorised to fulfil the duties of a Christian preacher in this critical and inquiring age. The Presbytery of Weem performed this task in what, on their own showing, ought to have been a most satisfactory way. "They proceeded to examine him *strictly and privately on his knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, and of Philosophy and Theology.*" The result of these "strict" gentlemen's investigations was that Mr Anderson was found qualified. But they were not unanimous. Mr Cameron of Logierait thought the candidate's appearance unsatisfactory, and entered his reasons of dissent. The Presbytery seem to have been a little indignant at this ;

\* I reprint this article, that Englishmen may see with what a wretched standard of clerical attainments Scotch Presbyteries and Synods are apt to be content.

† 23d May, 1863.



and their Committee, after pooh-poohing "the mere opinion of an individual member," came to the resolution that the Presbytery had "done their duty in a proper manner." The case now went to the Synod of Perth and Stirling, which "unanimously" agreed to dismiss the complaint, and to affirm the judgment of the Presbytery. From the Synod, the regular transition was to the Assembly, and, thanks to that fact, a "Certified Copy of Mr John Anderson's Written Examination, February 4, 1863," is now before us.

This document is interesting, because it shows what amount of proficiency in a student in subjects of paramount importance satisfies the judgment of modern Church Courts. The first thing that strikes one is the almost ludicrous easiness of the questions put. Only a dozen or a dozen and a half are allotted to each branch, and the great bulk of them ought not to puzzle the humblest tiro. In Logic, for instance, Mr Anderson was asked what a proposition was, and how many propositions there were in a syllogism? In Theology, he was requested to state the number of the tribes of Israel; and whether the Jews were ever carried into captivity? In Natural Philosophy he had to say what "a pulley" was; and he gave no answer whatever to the following questions:—"What is the distance of the earth from the sun?" and "What is the distance of the moon from the earth?" The moon is evidently one of Mr A.'s weak points, and he was lucky in finding a charitable Presbytery, and a still more charitable, because "unanimous," Synod. For, when his examiners inquired, "What is it that causes eclipses of the moon?" part of the answer was, that these are caused "by that

luminary wandering beyond its usual course!" We all know that terrestrial luminaries suffer occasional eclipse through wandering from their proper route, as Dr Guthrie did when he went out of his way to attack the character of a certain Highland village, or as the *Scotsman* does when it strays into historical and literary allusions. But the moon's character, Diana's character, for regularity is well established. At first we thought that, as the moon may legitimately be said to "wander" in poetry, our student was a disciple of the Physics-from-Psyche\* school; but this, it seems, is not the case.

We turned, however, with the keenest curiosity, to the *classical* part of Mr Anderson's Presbyterian ordeal, and some of our readers will be glad to know what we found *there*. Unluckily, the Latin part of his examination is not given; why, we are unable to conjecture. But the Greek part of it *is*; and a singular exhibition it makes. This successful candidate for a place in the ranks of the Scottish clergy was set to translate three verses (27-29) of the 9th chapter of the Gospel according to St Luke, and to "parse" one of them. The translation is not only inelegant, but in some parts inaccurate, to begin with; and as for the parsing, there are at least six errors in a verse of twenty-two words. Three times, wrong futures are attributed to familiar verbs; two well-known nouns are confounded with each other; and a pronoun in constant use is ludicrously blundered about. Now, we have no doubt that some giggling blockheads will address us on this occasion as Jack Cade in Shakspeare addresses Lord Say, for Jack

\* A living Scotch Professor of Divinity told his class that "physics" was derived from "Psyche."

thought "a noun" and "a verb" were "such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear." But though fools may laugh, the sensible men of the Church are well aware that this is no laughing matter. If men are allowed to enter a Church which makes so many demands on their activity, while unfit to deal with a little bit of the Greek Testament, what sort of theological competency may we expect from them in middle life? This is a serious question at all times, but it is more than serious when the present relations of the Protestant Churches to Romanism and Rationalism are taken into account.

The most melancholy part of all this is, that the only unusual thing about the business was Mr Cameron's protest. The Presbytery were quite satisfied with their probationer, and the Synod were quite satisfied with the Presbytery. Mr Anderson's certificates were all in order; and among them one reads (with a significant smile) the testimony of an Edinburgh professor that his "*proficiency was good.*" In the Assembly debate on the subject, Mr M'Farlane, Rannoch, threw down the gauntlet for the young man, and challenged Presbyteries generally to show that they were not in the habit of passing others no better qualified. "Taking the whole examination in comparison with the average of students even of the metropolitan Presbytery, Mr Anderson was not so lame as his respected co-presbyter would represent him to be. He was as well qualified as many whom he had seen passed by the different Presbyteries, and he thought his answers in divinity were very good." Nobody contradicted the reverend gentleman, and we may assume, therefore, that what he said was true. Of course, it will be understood that we make no attack,

properly so called, on Mr Anderson. His character is spoken of in the highest manner; and time will doubtless ripen his intellect and increase his knowledge. All we say is, that though *he* ought to have every justice, and not to be tried by a sterner standard than his peers, and though the Assembly's Committee will doubtless give him perfectly fair play, yet that the general standard ought to be everywhere higher. We know that this is the opinion of the best men within the Church, and of her best friends without it; and to shirk such questions is a mere ostrich-policy, which would be equally contemptible in a Conservative journal, for its cowardice and its stupidity.



### THE TWO EDINBURGH PROFESSORS.

The courteous Oxford, kind to our renown,  
Assumes two Greek Professors in our town.\*  
The Chair divided all may find who seek,  
One man's Professor,—t'other knows the Greek.



### A RADICAL MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

Can you tell why it is, that in country or city,  
The Rads never puff the productions of Whitty?†  
He's so sharp, shrewd, and honest, the pitiful elves  
Think he cannot be possibly one of themselves.

\* By sending to our great scholar Mr Veitch, the Clarendon Press proofs of his "Greek Verbs," addressed "Professor" Veitch.

† The late Edward Michael Whitty, the most brilliant democratic writer of his time.

## THE SCOT ABROAD.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, October 1864).

THIS very readable and instructive book is welcome, not only for its own sake, but because it contains at once a pledge and a proof that Mr Hill Burton means to write the History of Scotland in a complete and continuous narrative. Mr Burton has not only been long occupied with such inquiries, and in familiar communication with other students of similar tastes, but his literary talents are of proved excellence in this particular department. He is sagacious, clear-headed, and critical; but there is also a certain humanity, a certain appreciation of the humorous and genial elements of life and character, about him, without which historical writing must always be a dry and bloodless affair. His "Scot Abroad" is made particularly pleasant reading by this combination. He deals with a great variety of persons and incidents, and he never deals with them—like so many merely shrewd and critical writers—from the outside alone. He feels with the man; he places himself in the situation; and this, too (what we especially like about him), in a quiet, undemonstrative, and easy-going way. His admiration is expressed by a smile and not by an outburst; his humour by a chuckle rather than a guffaw. His style is not perfectly equal throughout. Sometimes he writes with a looseness of phrase below his talent and his subject. For instance, we cannot approve

\* *The Scot Abroad*. By John Hill Burton.



such a sentence as the following :—" Fortune favoured them (the Guises) mightily at one stroke, when Montgomery poked out the eye of Henry II. in the tilt-yard " (vol. i., p. 171). But, on the whole, it is a good style, clear, flowing, and effective in more than one kind of expression ; and enlivened by a dash of occasional—not too frequent—quaintness, in keeping with the writer's love of the odder and more piquant incidents of history. Perhaps it is at its best, on the serious side, in the passage which we sub-join as our first extract :—

#### THE SCOTTISH CHARACTER.

" It is fortunate, after all, that those who like to see a little of the good that is in the world can pass over that fermentation of the evil passions and selfish propensities, and look back upon the long, stern, honest struggle for independence, which was the real operative cause of the desired result. Had it been otherwise, Scotland may read the fate she would have had in Ireland. The Scots repaid the oppressors in the bloody retaliation of the three hundred years' war—the Irish are still taking it out. A sort of general balance of victories and defeats—of injuries and retaliations—put the two enemies in a position for bargaining, which they did with surly suspicion at first, with cordiality when they came better to know each other as friends. Their amity was recorded in a State paper such as no other part of the world can show—a fusion, by mutual consent, between two nations, the one six or eight times as powerful and populous as the other, with no other inequality save the placing of the centre of government in that spot within the larger of the two to which it would naturally have gravitated.

There are some less reasonable ethnological theories afloat in the world than that we may to some extent attribute to this long struggle the national characteristics which make the Scots appear a dry, hard, stern, unamiable, practical people, with

little capacity for cheerful enjoyments or susceptibility to the lighter and more transient excitements. Perhaps the original nature of the people and the work they had to do may have reacted on each other, leaving these characteristics deepened and hardened in the end. That the people had a nature susceptible to the deeper enthusiasm, the character of the struggle itself sufficiently tells. And in the tragedies and bereavements that it caused, the devotion it demanded, and the deep love for home and country to which it testified, we may, perhaps, attribute a certain sweetness and plaintive tenderness in the lyrical literature of the country, a vein of gentleness and beauty running through her rugged nature, like the lovely agates which nestle in the hollows of the black trap rocks, or the purple amethysts that sparkle in her granite corries."

The "Scot Abroad" is, in fact, an illustration of one particular phase of the national character and history. We have the Ancient League with France discussed, because to it was due the Scottish immigration into that country; while a description of the separate types of Scots roving adventurers naturally follows it, because France was the first loadstone which drew them to the Continent. Mr Burton, passing lightly over the early or fabulous stories about the League, holds that it first derived "efficient purpose" from the War of Independence against England, and from the claims of the English Kings to the French Crown. He is patriotic in the only sensible way,—not attaching too much importance to the separate existence and claims of what we now call Scotland, in the præ-Brucian period,—not stigmatising as villains all landholders on the north side of the Tweed who did not regard Edward and England with abhorrence from the beginning,—but still rejoicing that events enabled the northern part of the British island

to develop an independent life of its own, and enjoy the dignity of a separate nation. Laying down as a basis that our great struggle was against the English Normans,—(though hardly, we think, expressing sufficient gratitude to those Norman colonists among ourselves who supplied so much of the leadership of our resistance),—he devotes his first volume to an exposition of the natural alliance with England's chief enemy which followed the successful assertion of our autonomy. He traces it, and its consequences, in the politics, the domestic civilisation, the Protestantism, and the universities of Scotland. And he seems to us to deal with these great subjects in a spirit of more than common equity and moderation,—in a spirit (for example) much better than that of the remarkable but disagreeable work of the late Mr Buckle. He hates bigotry, but he can see the good side of a bigot. His cordial appreciation of Knox is particularly estimable; and generally he is free from that sectarian bitterness which divides Scotsmen about the history of their beautiful little kingdom in a way in which Englishmen have ceased to be affected by *theirs*. But if the first volume is the more instructive of the two, the second is the more amusing. It is less political and more literary,—less novel in some points of view, but more biographical and anecdotic. Portraits are given of all the different types of men who made the name of Scot famous in Europe,—the Scholar, the Soldier, the Statesman, the Artist. We particularly like the chapter on our Old Scholars,—a subject which we have never before seen handled with so much liveliness. Mr Burton is fully alive to the transcendent merit of Buchanan, of whom and his European reputation we may say,—borrowing an epigram

from Arthur Johnston,—that Scotland had many Swans but only one Phoenix :—

“ Mille tulit, fateor, sub iniquo sidere cygnos ;  
Unum Phœnicem Scotica terra dedit.”

He was, in truth, the founder of our literary reputation in Europe. In the days of Erasmus we had none, as is curiously shown in the “ Ciceronianus,” an admirable dialogue written to ridicule the Italian scholars who would admit no merit in any but a Ciceronian style of Latinity. All the Latin writers of Europe are there passed in review according to their nations, till Erasmus, wishing to have a hit at his own countrymen, makes Bulephorus say,—“ Shall we sail to Holland then ?” “ To Scotland, first,” says Nosoponus, derisively. “ I would not object,” is the answer, “ if I knew anybody there that you would tolerate,—(*Non gravarer, si quem illic nossem quem te laturum existimem*)”—and he goes on to express his preference for Denmark, the country of Saxo Grammaticus. In this part of his work, Mr Burton has some shrewd remarks on

#### THE USE OF LATIN BY THE OLD SCOTTISH WRITERS.

“ A free access to this great medium for the exchange of thought was indeed one of the compensating benefits which the Scots derived from the contest with England. The exclusion of the Scots scholars from English ground only prompted their aspiring spirits to seek a wider arena of distinction, and they found it in securing to themselves as an audience the learned men of all the world. When there arose two distinct languages, an English and a Scottish, the latter afforded a far too limited intellectual dominion to satisfy the ambition of Scottish men of letters. Hence they had recourse to Latin ; and Buchanan, as the first among them in the use of this language, was at the

same time the first of Latin narrators throughout the world since the days of Tacitus. It is not correct to speak of the Latin as a dead language among Scots scholars. They did not, perhaps, treat it with the strict accuracy which English scholarship had attained; that would, indeed, have been to treat it as a dead language, which cannot move. Buchanan, Bellenden, and Johnston had their provincialisms and peculiarities, as Livy the Paduan, and Sallust the Sabine had; and in the same manner they could afford to have them, since, instead of adjusting their sentences to the precedents laid down for them by the sentences of other authors not like minded with themselves, or living under the same mental conditions, they drew, in their own way, on the resources of the language used by them, adapted it to the purposes of a new order of society, and made it the vehicle of original and striking thoughts."

We must not, however, overrate Buchanan's want of nicety in the composition of verse. Tate in his "*Horatius Restitutus*" gives some instances of it, but remarks that such also occur in the lyrics of Casimir Serbievius, the famous Polish Jesuit, and even in those of the greatest modern Latinists of later times. We have been a good deal puzzled by a note of Mr Burton's containing the following

#### ANECDOTE OF PORSON.

"I remember Professor Pillans telling how he had once spoken to Porson about Buchanan, and found, much to his surprise and a little to his indignation, that the arch-critic had never heard of such a name in letters. It would not do, however, to take credit for ignorance about one whose works came through the classic presses of Stephens and Wetsten, and whose text was sifted and purified of casual inaccuracies by the skilled eye of Burmann, not to speak of the like homage paid to him by Ruddiman, a mere Scotsman. So Porson condescended to



take a glance. It was very brief. His instincts at once led him to the unpardonable crime, and roaring out, 'Ugh—a false quantity!' he flung the little Wetsten from him as if it had stung him. It is said that Lord North, sound asleep during one of Burke's philippics on him, started awake when the orator used a false quantity in the word *rectigal*."

We cannot believe that Porson had never heard of Buchanan, and suspect that Pillans either misunderstood him, or was afterwards misunderstood himself. It is true that we are unable to point to any mention of Buchanan by Porson, though his "Tracts" by Kidd is now before us. But he was familiar with his contemporary Muretus; and we must remember that Buchanan translated the *Medea* and *Alcestis* of Euripides—the latter of which versions is referred to by Porson's disciple Monk, in his edition of that play, and must have been known to the still greater critic. *Apropos* of anecdotes, we subjoin another, the subject of which is the famous

#### MARSHAL STAIR.

"There are two common anecdotes bringing out this characteristic—one represents Louis XIV. testing his breeding by offering him the *pas* in entering the royal carriage. Stair made his bow and stepped in. 'A vulgar man,' said Louis, 'would have teased me with hesitations and excuses.' The other rests on his remarkable resemblance to the Regent Orleans, who, desiring to turn a scandalous insinuation or jest on it, asked the Ambassador if his mother had ever been in Paris? The answer was, 'No, but my father was!' There is perhaps no other retort on record so effective and so beautifully simple. If the question meant anything, that meaning was avenged; if it meant nothing, there was nothing in the answer."

Mr Burton is too patriotic to add that this incomparable

retort, if it was ever made by Stair, was not made by him first. It occurs in Macrobius, as having been made by a Provincial to the Emperor Augustus, who had put the same questionable question.

We conclude with a curious account of a "rise" taken by one of our local guides out of a

#### FRENCH LITERARY TOURIST.

"But M. Dargaud met with wonders in Edinburgh denied to the eyes and ears of the common herd even of tourists. He gives a succinct account of the manner in which Darnley was put to death before the house of the Kirk-o'-Field was blown up to conceal the deed. This account is carefully culled from the traditions which he collected '*au pied de l'église expiatoire bâtie sur ce funébre lieu.*' This statement suggests uneasy suspicions as to the stories that may be palmed off by guides upon confiding tourists. Monstrous falsehoods are told by the whole class; and it is a signal exemplification of their resolution utterly to abandon their sense and discretion along with their work, that holiday tourists should take instructions in the most abstruse portions of archæology from the most ignorant of the human race. The 'rises' which this class of public instructors take out of their victims are in the general case extravagant enough. Yet the guide who so far fathomed the French historian's appetite and discretion as to show him the expiatory church on the scene of the death of Darnley, must have been an honour to his profession."

The reader has now sufficiently seen what a mine of agreeable reading the "Scot Abroad" is; and will probably be of our opinion, that if Mr Burton had never written anything else it would have given him a distinguished place among the men of letters of this country.

## PRIAPUS HIGG LITERATULUS LOQUITUR.

“The Age is false ; with cant all things are rife ;  
Kings, nobles, priests, are bad ; oh, weary life !  
I must console me with my neighbour's wife !”

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## DAME IDA PFEIFFER.

Through regions by wild men and cannibals haunted,  
Old Dame Ida Pfeiffer goes lone and undaunted ;  
But, bless you, the risk 's not so great as it 's reckon'd,  
She 's too plain for the first, and too tough for the second.

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## BLOGG ON THE CLASSICS.

“I'll put down Latin,” Blogg says, “for I hate it :”  
Blogg can't destroy, more than he can translate it.

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“When Latin 's settled, I will put down Greek, too.”  
Does he know Homer ?—Yes, but not to speak to.

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## A RADICAL REFORMER.

Tomkins will clear the land, they say,  
From every foul abuse :  
So chimneys in the olden day,  
Were cleansed by a goose.

## LORD AMBERLEY.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, February 1865).

WHEN a new ship is launched, a time-honoured custom requires that a bottle of wine should be broken against her bows. The launch of Viscount Amberley into public life has not been neglected by the *Scotsman*, but unluckily our contemporary has nothing better to celebrate it with than a bottle of small beer. "A speech by Lord Amberley, son of Earl Russell," the *Scotsman* says, "if it cannot be said to have given resuscitation to the question of reform, has given importance to a reform meeting at Leeds, and begun a career to the speaker." This is kind, but it is not English. A man may begin his career by making a speech; but to talk of his speech as having begun a career to him, is an oddity inexcusable in the most humble stages of a Scotch journalist's life. We fancy that in cases of this kind the errand-boys in training are put on to practise political criticism, while lads a little older are being taught on another part of the premises to garble a Conservative statesman's address. There is a fine bond uniting these geniuses, who are only in different phases of their development; and their common jealousy of the stranger prevents their proprietor from sending to the Reform Club for educated contributors.

This kind of thing—habitual, here—looks particularly bad on occasions of real interest. To a Whig who can write, or has read anything, the entry of a new Russell

into public life must always be an important event. The family has even a European reputation for its attachment to the popular side of politics. Niebuhr himself somewhere brings it in to illustrate the importance of hereditary opinions in the great houses of free States, a subject naturally forced on a historian of Rome, if only by several curious passages in Livy. Of course, there is a great deal of vulgar delusion on the point. Some people suppose that the Russells have figured as "friends of the people" from the Conquest downwards, and that they had a main hand in getting up Magna Charta, of which Earl Russell is always talking. But in those ages England never heard of them. The name does not occur in Domesday, except among the sub-tenants; and they were only decent Dorsetshire squires when they had the luck to attract the attention of Henry the Eighth. In fact, they rose as tools of despotism; they did nothing for the cause of freedom during the Civil War; and the man who became famous by losing his head in Charles the Second's reign (his head would never have made him famous in any other way) was the proved associate of men in the pay of the French Court. The Liberalism of the Russells is after all only a modern affair, and has never been rendered illustrious by a great action or a great speech; but the wealth and prominence of the House have advertised it to all ends of the earth, and certainly only such men of the party as are up to their grammar ought to be employed to sing its praises. The juvenile Amberley is unfortunately not a Whig only, but a prig. He is one of those chips of the old block who are too like the block; a mere *abridgment* of his father; a smaller pedant, a feebler bore. If he was



a downright dunce he would be more respected ; but he has just that irritating amount of ability, that degree of talent, mediocre in relation even to the mediocrity of his sire, which robs him of pity without bringing him admiration. A premature reviewer,—a precocious sage,—a lad logical in knickerbockers, and statistical while still in his teens,—is one of the curses of our society. He can do everything a little, and nothing brilliantly ; thinks just as other people do, and says what it is obvious to say ; is fluent, but a fribble ; tolerable, yet tedious ; and has about as little genius, originality, or dæmonic force as a mahogany table has blossom or sap. The type is a common one just now, and we shudder when we see it in a lord, because there is no getting rid of the cleverish lord, who is toadied by flunkeys, and encouraged in dismal oratory by reporting. A young Whigling of rank breaking the shell is a melancholy spectacle, because these kind of poultry are attended by the same superstitious reverence which induced the ancients to take omens from the feeding of sacred chickens. A thousand journals will discuss this Lord Amberley's cackle, and his way of treating the public grain of political questions.

In the speech at Leeds which has suggested these observations, Lord Amberley began by something like a direct advocacy of mere agitation. “ If the people really do not desire the possession of the franchise, I would teach them to desire it.” Why ? The franchise was made for man, and not man for the franchise ; and if all the essentials of good government are secured under a limited system of representation, why extend it ? Then, he came to what he evidently thought a most knowing hit, which would take

the enemy's breath away. "There is a circumstance which is exceedingly surprising, and that is, that those who are so constantly talking of the popular apathy about reform, say also that these listless people who have not the slightest desire for the possession of votes would, if once enfranchised, be converted into a frantic and unreasonable mob, who would carry everything before them—who would be determined to have everything their own way—and would listen to no voice in the councils of the nation that was not in harmony with their own. It does seem a little strange and inconsistent that those who are so indifferent to the possession of power should yet be so immoderate in its use." But the inconsistency is quite imaginary. The love of power grows with the indulgence of power, to begin with; and periods of distress and excitement which now pass harmlessly because the mob is not the source of political power among us, would not necessarily pass harmlessly under other conditions. Has this young man never heard of '48 and '49, and of the Chartist Convention, and the arrests and trials and punishments, in which his own father took such a part? And does he suppose that a Parliament in which a Chartist majority was possible would have shown "no particular tendency either to abolish the House of Lords, overthrow the Church, or seize the property of the rich and divide it among the poor." The poor Whigling forgets, in the feeble impudence of his attack on men like Lyndhurst, that the present House of Commons is not the creation of the Reform Bill only, but of the resistance to the Reform Bill,—that it is what it is, because it was not reformed too much. Lord Amberley, so far from giving due weight to this side of things, took

occasion to pledge himself to Mr Gladstone's theory, by which the burden of showing why anybody whatever is kept out of the suffrage is thrown on the world at large. He then went on to sneer at the House of Lords, which, considering that his connection with that body was the only reason in life why anybody was listening to him at that moment, must decidedly be pronounced ungrateful. And the whole tirade was unrelieved by a single graceful or brilliant expression,—by a single novel thought or felicitous illustration. The very glibness of the flow of the speech was a part of the mediocrity of the speaker. A young man of undeveloped powers would have had less command of the commonplaces of oratory; but Lord Amberley's stream ran easily, precisely because its volume was small. The Radicalism of Lord Amberley will be mischievous in a kind of way which he does not intend; its weakness will lessen the public respect for an order to which his mere criticism could do no harm. He has made a wretched start in life; and the less attention the Whigs draw to it, the better for them and for him.



### THEOLOGUS INDOCTUS "LIBERALEM" SE JACTANS.

Quoth Principal Jubbles, that "Liberal" card,  
Let us widen our doctrine, old Calvin was hard.  
Ah, ha! cries a student, that's just why you hate him,  
You find him too hard when you've got to translate him.

## THE CORRESPONDENCE OF LEIGH HUNT.\*

( *Edinburgh Courant*, May 1862).

It has been disputed by moralists whether it is an advantage to a man to attain old age, but whatever the true opinion may be, nobody can doubt that Leigh Hunt was fortunate in the privilege of reaching length of years. He outlived his early faults. He developed successfully all the nobler parts of his nature. He triumphed over misfortune. And not only did he keep his fame alive to the last, which, as Dr Johnson once said, is no inconsiderable success, but he enjoyed in advanced life an Indian summer of fame, not less brilliant and far more soft and agreeable than that of his youth. His was altogether a pleasant old age,—a *jucunda senectus* such as the ancients loved to look forward to; and one felt inclined, watching the unabated vivacity of the old poet, to address him in the words of Anacreon to the grasshopper,—

“ τὸ δὲ γῆρας οὐ σε τείρει  
σοφίᾳ, γηγινήῃς, φίλῳ μινε,  
\* \* \*  
σχιδὸν εἴ θεοῖς ὅμοιος.”

Old age certainly failed to wear him out in spirit, and he remained intelligent, cheerful, and song-loving, to the last.

His place in English literature is not difficult to define, and it is a very honourable one. He was, take him all in all, the finest belles-lettrist of his day. Isaac Disraeli, the

\* *The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*. Edited by his Eldest Son.

only contemporary belles-lettres man worthy of being put in comparison with Leigh Hunt, was assuredly a man of genius; and he was more learned than Leigh. But though Disraeli has sometimes exquisite felicities of criticism and expression, his inferiority in poetic genius places him altogether on a lower level. We cannot say, of course, that Leigh Hunt was a great poet. But, then, his poetry was of a fine and delicate quality, and it permeated all that he did, his criticism, his humour, his gossip, giving these a certain grace and airiness not to be obtained through any meaner gift. His natural branch of literature was that of ornament, and he was guided in producing it, equally by fresh vivid feeling and a cultivated taste. So that, though he could not claim to rank either with the chief poets or prose writers of the age, his influence in promoting the amenities, the higher amusements, of letters, was substantially exerted in their cause, and in the same intellectual region. He did much good by helping to make the great men of his generation known to many who would not otherwise have appreciated them so soon; and by reviving a love of the older writers whom the eighteenth century had allowed to fall into oblivion. To use a homely image, he was an admirable *taster*. He had a critical palate as quick and as nice as that required in the tea trade or the wine trade. And, taking an almost sensual pleasure in the enjoyable parts of books, he was led, when young, into the riotous extravagance of a literary voluptuary. Hence the over-indulgence of a love of sweet sights, and sounds, and fancies, which gives a nauseating effect to his earlier writings, and which had an undoubtedly bad influence on his friend Keats. This sybaritism it



was, and its corresponding affectations and conceits, which disgusted Lockhart with Hunt, and made our fine trenchant countryman, whose lucid penetrating intellect has never been sufficiently admired amongst us, look on him with contempt. We are not going into the old question of Hunt's quarrel with the Scottish Tories, in those early days. It was afterwards made up, and the worst features of it regretted, on both sides. But we are sure that Hunt in his first stage must have been inevitably repulsive, by his conceit and aggressiveness, to men of a different political and literary school. We find in these volumes (vol. i. p. 104) Keats writing to him,—“The last *Examiner* was a battering ram against Christianity, blasphemy, Tertullian, Erasmus, Sir Philip Sydney, etc.” Not having the British Museum at hand, we cannot refer to the *Examiner* of May 1817; but in spite of the jocosity of the letter, it is plain that Hunt was indulging in a friskiness of satire which his opponents could not be expected to like so much as his friends. Yet the attacks on him in *Blackwood* are sometimes called merely wanton and undeserved, as if a gentleman who serves at “a battering-ram” must not take the risk of arrows, stones, boiling-lead, and what not, from the defenders on the Castle walls!

This Correspondence is properly a companion to Leigh Hunt's “Autobiography,” one of the most charming and instructive of all his works. We can follow him by the help of both books through his whole life, and see the history of his mind, from the turbid fervour of his boyhood to the calm, cheerful, enlightenment of his old age. The general facts of his career are too well known to need more than the barest recapitulation. He was the son

of a clergyman of a respectable Barbadian family; and was in his sixteenth or seventeenth year when the present century opened. He was educated at Christ Hospital; started the *Examiner* newspaper, where he wrote an article on ~~George the Fourth~~, for which he was imprisoned; went to Italy just at the time his friend Shelley was drowned, and lived there three years—part of the time with Lord Byron; returned to London, and had heavy struggles as a man of letters, at a period when he might have been expected to have made a solidly successful position; was pensioned, and passed his remaining years in comfort and in intellectual activity up to the last. The Correspondence presents a tolerably full picture of him through all this experience. A good deal of it is not very important perhaps, but it is all very readable; and the book is equally interesting as a storehouse of amusing matter, and a contribution to the social and literary history of the first half of the century. Hunt's letters are all very characteristic. They are not to be put in comparison with those of Gray or Cowper, who belonged, we must remember, to a letter-writing generation. But they are lively and graphic, and have the indispensable merit, as letters, of reflecting the writer's actual mood. One is amused at the frank raptures of Hunt with the cheapness of fruit in Italy. "What do you think," he says, "of the finest large grapes, exactly a halfpenny a pound? What of eleven of the finest peaches for three halfpence? An ab-solution," he adds, "is as cheap as apricots" (vol. i., p. 193). "But," he afterwards says, "nothing can make up to me for the want of proper *treey* trees and grassy walks. I am often seized with a desire to walk through particular spots

in England ; generally a path in a field. Sometimes I long for the Hendon Road ; sometimes to that pretty entrance to Hampstead for Kentish Town ; often for the Hampstead lanes and the slopes of West End." While "longing" thus, Hunt was at Florence, and Italy was the country whose language and literature he knew better than any other but the English. The passage shows how large a place external nature held in his little circle of enjoyments and supports ; but no future Hunt will find this feeling gratified in the northern outskirts of London, as it used to be. The mason and bricklayer are frightening away from their slopes the Dryads and Oreads of that jolly Cockney paradise where many a man of letters has loitered happily before dining at the Spaniards or Jack Straw's Castle.

It was after Leigh Hunt returned from Italy, and when he was in middle life, that he fell upon the most troublous period of his career. He had given up a Government clerkship (which he got, by the way, from a Tory Administration) to plunge into Liberal journalism early in life. The *Examiner* had succeeded, and even his imprisonment,—the worst part of which was its expensiveness,—had its good side, by the political dignity and repute it gave him, and by making him more widely known. But Shelley's death, and Byron's early disgust with the *Liberal*, made the Italian expedition a failure. The *Examiner* became the subject of a dispute between his brother and himself, and finally passed out of his hands. With a large family, some of them sore trials to him, Leigh Hunt found himself obliged to begin the world again, and went through miseries,—a clear, though brief, indication of which his son

here gives us. In order to understand the liability of a man so well known as Hunt to these, we must remember, what has been said before, that he was a pure belles-lettrist. He did not belong to that class engaged in the business-like branches of literature, whose work, being a necessary article of consumption, secures for them the steady prosperity of a butcher or baker. Much less was he one of those "middle-men" of the profession, who farm out work from the booksellers, and (so to speak) sublet it, putting their name to publications for which they have done only what corresponds with the labours of the factory overseer, or the nautical supercargo. He was purely an artist, appealing mainly to the cultivated, opulent, and fastidious class. In his little shop, you could not buy tripe or sausages, but pastoral milk, dainty macaroons, honey like that of Hymettus, or of Borgue in Galloway. His wares were of a simple and rural kind,—

"Sunt nobis mitia poma  
Castaneæ molles, et pressi copia lactis."

Now, these are not the moneymaking kind of trades, especially under the charge of men with little head for figures and details. Just at that time, too,—we are speaking of the time from '30-2, onwards,—utilitarianism was very powerful; politics ran high; and "Liberalism" was so successful that individual Liberals even of mark were ungratefully kicked aside. We all know from Moore's Diary and Sydney Smith's Memoirs, how much professed Whig partisans took to grumbling during the years of which we speak. But Leigh Hunt was a Liberal, a man who remembered when the Whigs themselves were throwing cold water on Reform; and, as one of the real men of

the movement, he, of course, had less chance of recognition than the professed henchmen who helped a faction to ride on the back of the movement into power. Tom Moore had assiduously fiddled while King Whig was mounting the Many-headed Beast to charge Downing Street; and yet Tom esteemed himself as ill used, as he used to be when Lady Holland was sulky, and did not even ask him to sit down to breakfast, perhaps thinking that it was cheaper to have a lap-dog:—

“Constat leviori bellua sumtu  
Nimirum, et capiunt plus intestina poetæ.”\*

Leigh Hunt, then, who was no parasite, was but little likely to have anything done for him; and long years passed before the Whigs got him a pension. During these years, he received noble kindness from the late Duke of Devonshire, a large-hearted patrician, not unmindful how his Cavendish ancestors had befriended Hobbes. Among men of letters who stuck by him, was our own illustrious Carlyle, for a considerable time his near neighbour, among the red-brick terraces and quiet trees of Chelsea, kept alive by the river which there still suggests something of the freshness of the country; and the warm-hearted Laman Blanchard, over whose memory a halo of love brighter even than his crown of wit still hangs. Macaulay, too, behaved well to Leigh Hunt, and figures several times to advantage in this Correspondence, excepting in one laughable paragraph, where he describes Carlyle (a writer superior to himself not merely *in size* but *in species*) as “a man of talents,” “absurdly overpraised!” He introduced Hunt to the *Edinburgh Review*, in which Leigh’s best paper, we

\* Juv., sat. vii., pp. 77, 8.



think, was that on Pepys. Here is a short letter from Macaulay, very like a bit of one of his articles, though more colloquial than he ever condescended to be in print:—

SPENSER.

“I do not know that we differ in judgment about Spenser. But there is a liking which does not depend on the judgment. I see Rousseau's genius as clearly as any of his admirers. But he does not attract me. I read ‘Gil Blas’ once a year; and I do not care if I never see Rousseau's novel again. It is the same with painting. I know that the ‘Raising of Lazarus,’ in the National Gallery, is a great work; and I partly feel its merit. But I look at it with little or no pleasure, and should be very little concerned if I heard that it was burned. On the other hand, there are pictures of much less fame and power which, if I could afford it, I would hang over my fireplace, and look at half an hour every day. So with female beauty. If a man were to say that Mrs Siddons was not a fine woman, we should think that he must have no eyes. But a man might well say that, though a fine woman, she did not attract him, that she did not hit his taste, and that he liked Miss Foote's or Miss O'Neil's looks better. Just so I say about Spenser. To deny him the rank of a great poet would be to show utter ignorance of all that belongs to the art. But his excellence is not the sort of excellence in which I take especial delight.”

This is characteristic, and deserves the attention of those who would understand Macaulay's genius. What he missed in the “Fairy Queen,” and the “Nouvelle Heloise,” was no doubt the human element, the dramatic reality, which he found, though allied with a meaner kind of power, in the justly popular novel of *Le Sage*; and his sympathy with which naturally accompanied his own gift for investing with a novel-like interest a narrative of

events. Having quoted one of the comparatively few letters to Leigh Hunt from eminent men in these volumes, let us add another from "Father Prout," the wittiest of scholars and the most scholarly of wits, referring to a well-known French poem, which both correspondents had translated:—

FATHER PROUT TO LEIGH HUNT.

"*From the Rev. Francis S. Mahony.*

"16 Great Marlboro' Street, 20th May, 1847.

"MY DEAR MR HUNT,—The other day (this day month) I spent some hours with Kirkup in Firenze, and talked much of you and other pleasant subjects connected with the old Shelley period of literature and philosophy, winding up with a flask of Montepulciano, concerning which I need say nothing to the happy translator of Redi's dithyrambic, which you have truly rendered a 'Redi made easy' for all Cockneydom.

"I should not have bothered you about your old friend or about myself, knowing your time to be of such value; but on looking into two volumes freshly issued by you—and I never miss anything from that quarter—my vanity was fairly knocked on the head by an assertion which precedes your prose version of 'Vert-Vert.' You 'never heard or read' of a version in metre published in *Fraser* a dozen years ago, when that (barrel) organ was in full tune under Maginn's inspiration. I send you the version, which, singularly enough, anticipates your own idea of dividing the story into distinct *parts* with distinct titles. You will say, if you read it, that it is rather impudent to call it a *translation*, but I have certain theories which I am prepared to defend on that topic; and I will ever maintain that the French phrase, *sacrébleu!* for instance, is not correctly translated by writing the English words—'accursed blue;' the true version must necessarily be 'Damn your eyes!' You have in this nutshell the whole theory in question.

"An edition of a thousand copies of the book I send you has been long ago absorbed into the libraries of England and Ireland; but as Tom Moore, who figures also in the volume, has actually printed, in his last issue of the 'Melodies,' that *he never heard* of any Latin or French translations of any songs of his, save some very poor attempts which he enumerates, omitting (as the *Athenæum* remarked on the subject) the part of Hamlet in that respect, you have a great precedent for ignoring the existence of my 'Vert-Vert' without having the same paltry motive, which I fear induced Tom to print what he knew to be a positive lie, for he both heard and sorely complained of the thing.

"I make no apology for writing to you *freely*, as I know how you scorn humbug; and I hold valued recollections of a day's converse with you some years ago in some shady part of Chelsea, where I had the pleasure of paying you my sincere respects.—I am, dear Mr Hunt, your admirer,

"FRANK MAHONY."

It will be seen that "Tom Moore" again comes out in a shabby character, here; just as in another place we find him persisting in reprinting a squib on Hunt's "Byron and his Contemporaries," long after Leigh had apologised for that book and remodelled his view of all the events mentioned in it. Leigh Hunt was most honourably active in repairing the errors of his early days; and was kindly and charitable in every line he wrote. But whether his volunteer Birthday Odes to the Queen, or the fact that the Whigs had done him, though tardily, justice, or his obligations to the Duke of Devonshire,—whether some or all of these things annoyed his brother "Liberals,"—we don't know. Certain it is, that for some time, even in his old age, he suffered injustice at their

hands. Mr Dickens caricatured him as Harold Skimpole, in "Bleak House." The *Athenæum* gave him several sly stabs. Yet, having lived down so much, he also lived down these things, and died at peace with all the world, in what was an *euthanasia* for a man of his long warfare with the cares of life. A true lover of letters and of mankind,—friendly, genial, and essentially honourable in nature,—Leigh Hunt has left a good and pleasant memory behind him; and his books will long be remembered among the gayest and gracefulest contributions to the Belles Lettres of England.



## SPECIMENS OF A NEW DIBDIN.

(*Punch*, 1851).

### NOTHING LIKE HOCK.

A PLAGUE of those musty old lubbers  
 Who said that a Mid. must not think;  
 That a gun-room was no place for "rubbers,"  
 And "grog" was the right thing to drink!  
 Johannisberg! could they have twigg'd it,  
 How their vulgar ideas 'twould mock!  
 And, spite of their rules,  
 The old fools  
 Would surely, one fancies, have swigg'd it,  
 And sworn their was nothing like Hock!

My father, when I gave a guinea,  
For a *bouquet* for Eleanor B——,  
Said, "Jack, never be such a ninny;  
You'll ruin your mother and me."  
I pass'd round the sunny Rudesheimer,  
And bow'd to that worthy old cock :  
He was sulky—and mother,  
And sister, and brother.  
I humm'd from an opera rhymer,  
And swore there was nothing like Hock !

T' other day, as my uncle was preaching,  
From the family pew out I slunk—  
The Dean is a good hand at teaching ;  
But the previous night I'd been drunk ;  
So I bolted for soda ; outpour'd it  
With some wine for the foundation rock.  
It was grand ! it was glorious !  
Fresh, foaming, victorious !  
And I worship'd the Rhine as I floor'd it,  
And swore there was nothing like Hock !

Then trust me, if you must be drinking,  
Let the grape line the way to the grave ;  
Rum-and-water—at least to my thinking—  
Is coarse as the salt of the wave :  
As for me, wine's my one only tippie—  
I am just going off to the dock—  
Seedy, well, late or early,  
To set you up, fairly—



At sea with a bore,  
Or at leisure on shore,—  
'Pon my honour, there's nothing like Hock !

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## THE PRIDE OF THE OCEAN.

SEE the shore lined with Cockneys—the tide comes in fast;  
The nautical Tomkins cries, “Sharp there ! avast !”  
The blocks and the wedges the mallets obey,  
(As the dockyards what similar blocks in town say).  
Miss Higsby, the figure-head makes at the sign,  
Like her pa's, have its features all redden'd with wine !  
And built at a cost that all Manchester shocks,  
The Pride of the Ocean is launched from the stocks.

Soon the pennant is flying ; the vessel they rig  
For a very old sailor of family Whig ;  
And now round to Portsmouth she goes to be stored,  
And has six months to wait to get seamen on board.  
She's wanted at home ; so, to Malta she hies,  
And, snug at a buoy, off Valetta she lies ;  
Then cruises a little, when—how the folks stare !—  
The Pride of the Ocean's in want of repair !

Our prize is sent home then ; with ardour they burn ;  
They patch up the bows, and they alter the stern ;  
Try a fresh batch of masts ; and—this seems an odd do !—  
This extravagant vessel they fit with a Screw !  
Still, still she won't sail ; the “Returns” prove her crimes ;  
And the gallant Sir Charley writes off to the *Times*.

So now, as she 'll never defend the old cause  
Of our nation, our freedom, religion, or laws,  
Her timbers are crazy, and open her seams,  
Sir Booby, her builder, awakes from his dreams.  
"Ah! he sees his mistake;" but the Lords, in a sulk,  
The Pride of the Ocean cut down to a hulk.

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## DR GUTHRIE AS MODERATOR.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, May 1862).

WE are told that when Cicero in the course of his celebrated speech *Pro Murena* was delivering the brilliant passages in which he banters the Stoics, Cato was heard to observe, "What a facetious Consul we have!" If a facetious Consul be a proper subject for irony, what shall we say to a Comic Moderator? This was the character in which Dr Guthrie made his appearance on Thursday,\* having "his shapely *gastrocnemii* in full silken relief," as the *Scotsman* (with overwhelming humour) described him. The Doctor was introduced on the occasion, as "at the head of all the gifted and popular preachers of our day," praise half of which seems unjust to Mr Spurgeon, and the other half of which we cannot criticise, since Dr Candlish did not say what he thought the highest kind of gifts for a Christian divine, in an age of accumulated erudition and widespread

\* May 22.

scepticism. His philanthropy was justly extolled, for nobody will forget his Ragged Schools, even though they should cease to remind the world of their existence, by perambulating the streets with a drum. Then came the speech with its predominantly facetious character, on which we propose to offer some observations. Such speeches are apt to be altogether mistaken by superficial readers. The carefully-got-up fun, the little bit of natural description, the profuse professions of charity towards all churches and parties, are only the Doctor's garnishing. At bottom, he is a very active and very knowing member of his own denomination, with all its characteristic prejudices in full force, and the "genial" element, which ordinary folk think the essence of his mind, is nothing but its ornamental part. A faithful Establishment man, trusting all that verdant and flowery rhetoric, would find that, like the beautiful green hanging-papers of which we heard so much the other day, it had arsenic at the bottom of its pleasant hue. We don't mean that Dr Guthrie would do *him*, individually, any harm; but that Dr Guthrie fundamentally does as little justice to political or ecclesiastical opponents, as the sourest and narrowest sectary who passes for a bigot. In short, he is a funny and genial bigot; and it is mere conventionalism which makes people fancy that bigotry is necessarily cold, gloomy, and bitter. Human nature admits of great variety, and we can easily believe in an Inquisitor who should poke the heretic he meant to burn playfully in the ribs, or sigh gracefully as he sent a female martyr to the scaffold. These days,—thanks to philosophy and the ascendancy of lay power in Europe,—are gone by. But fanatical pre-

judice has still a good deal of power in the world, and may co-exist with liveliness and minor poetry, as well as with asceticism and logical rigidity.

Now, just let the reader, with no unkindness indeed, but by way of a literary study if he likes, look at Dr Guthrie's Thursday speech in the light of our theory. The pleasant part of it, the garnishing, is of full average quality. We have "the oil of peace on the stormy waters," the "star" over the "Alps," and all that kind of thing. But look *into* the harangue, pick out the passages in which the speaker is really talking to the stronger heads of his audience ; such as the following :—

"The Free Church is nearly a major now—(laughter)—and ought to be getting into its senses. What is the history of the last nineteen years? Harmonious settlements, unscattered flocks, peace, and a good measure of plenty within our borders—(loud cheers)—mutual regard among the brethren. No ranks frowning here upon ranks there—(cheers)—no right and left hand of the Moderator. (Laughter and cheers). These harmonious settlements, unscattered flocks, some measure of plenty, and great measure of peace—these spring from liberty of thought and action—these have characterised the last nineteen years of our history—(cheers)—and although our revenues have not been such as to afford such livings to our ministers as we could have wished, they have been the astonishment of the world, and put us in circumstances far better than are contemplated in the blessed saying—'Better a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.' (Renewed cheers)."

Ought the little joke about the Free Church being "a major" now, ought the scriptural phrase at the end, really to mislead anybody? The meaning of the passage is

simple. It means that the members of the Church of Scotland hate each other, that they are divided by faction and jealousy, and that the Free Church, on the contrary, is a temple of peace and brotherly love. An ordinary sectary would say so in plain English, and be abused by both sides as a bigot. Dr Guthrie virtually says it, with a grin of fun, and a simper of sentiment; and we are told that he is such a "genial" man, that his very opponents ought to love him. Now, this is the kind of humbug against which we protest. The new Moderator of the Free Church has a right to believe in the exclusive excellence of his friends. He has a right to abuse his enemies. But he has no right to enjoy these privileges, and pass all the while for a philanthropist superior to the predilections of party or sect. Besides, it is very unfair to Dr Candlish! That worthy does not pretend to be "genial," and honestly passes off his vinegar as vinegar. The result is that he gets more abuse than his fair share. Dr Guthrie's vinegar, on the other hand, figures as a nice light acid wine, seasonable drinking in a warm May. We should have greater tolerance for this error, if we did not observe that Dr Guthrie carefully cultivates it for his own material advantage. The fact is, that he belongs to a denomination which necessarily bases itself on illiberality, which is by its very existence a protest against the prevailing law and constitution of the country, which *must* therefore be narrow, self-sufficient, and tinged with spiritual pride. But, then, he is a "popular" preacher; a vague liberalism is in fashion, and he *must* be liberal. The result is a clever compromise, leading to such curious mixtures of comic geniality and practical intolerance as we have just seen, and making



the Doctor the "success" that he is. To our minds, however, the result has something disagreeable about it. It is like the apple which Bob Sawyer, when a boy, presented to the young lady who afterwards married Mr Winkle, and which she objected to as having been kept in his breeches-pocket till it was "unpleasantly warm." Dr Guthrie's self-conscious geniality has as "unpleasantly warm" a character, and one as suggestive of the breeches-pocket, as that celebrated apple.

The Doctor's forte is not reasoning, so he relies on illustration mainly in this speech. Having to touch the Cardross Case, he compares the pursuer to Pharaoh in the Red Sea, thus getting some fun, and raising "cheers and laughter," out of the fourteenth chapter of Exodus. After this pleasantry from the Pentateuch, he proceeds to deal with the difficulties of presentees in the Establishment, "not rejoicing" at them—of course, that is part of the business—but so describing them, all the same, that his audience yelled with pleasure. Here, again, a comic illustration supplies the place of learning and argument:—

"If the people are dissatisfied, and if they have the pluck to fight their own battle, through what a frightful ordeal has the poor presentee to go—(loud laughter and cheers)—and then, how are the people tempted to manufacture reasons which the Church Courts must allow to *bolster up a good cause with bad arguments!* We thought—and the longer we tried our way and saw the other, we had the more confidence we were right—that a man in the capacity of a free agent was not bound to give his reasons, nor a woman neither. (Loud laughter and cheers). A man is not bound to give reasons why he refuses a servant. A constituency are not bound to give reasons why they refuse a candidate for the membership of Parliament.

I am not bound as a patient to give reasons why I decline such and such a physician. A client—nay, a criminal—is not bound to give his reasons why he declines the services of a particular lawyer; *and everybody knows that a lady is not bound to give her reasons why she declines a suitor*—(renewed laughter and cheers)—even though she might have no better reason than that, when the gentleman came to pay his addresses, he took out his spectacles, placed them on his nose, and read a long lumbering speech.”

A very small logical faculty would have saved Dr Guthrie from such an exposure as this. In the first place, we want to know how the “bad arguments” of an opposition prove that their “cause” is a “good one,” or what is to prevent a good cause (if they have one) from being supported by good arguments? In the second place, does not Dr Guthrie see that his joke about “the lady” is a mere begging of the question? that a presentee has a *prima facie* right at law to his benefice, and that the lady’s suitor has no rights but what she confers upon him? If this is the strength of argument with which Rome is assailed, we don’t wonder that she is neither overthrown nor converted; and that Passaglia disdains to come here to that contest in the Latin language, to which the *Courant* is always wanting our champions to challenge him.

Graver reasoning was not perhaps to be expected from a clerical droll. And, yet, what is the worst part of such an exhibition? Simply this, that Dr Guthrie—minor poet and mild comedian as he is, a man of good philanthropical activity no doubt, but not a theologian, not a reasoner—is one of a race apparently destined to have no successors in their Church! He did not glance at this difficulty on

Thursday, while exulting in the pecuniary prosperity of the leading men of his body, and mildly hinting at the penury of its pastoral clergy in the country districts. Yet, if the Establishment has its internal aches and pains, that is better, as being compatible with real strength at bottom, than an intellectual atrophy, a perishing by sheer weakness, such as that with which the Free Church is threatened, and of which Dr Begg's late proposal to call her shop-boys into her ministry was a humiliating result. Dr Begg was at least kind to his Church. He saw her in a state of consumption, and suggested that she should have fresh ass's milk. Dr Guthrie gives her only jokes and metaphors, and tries to entertain her with ridicule of the parent whom she first deserted, and has ever since abused. His whole speech on the occasion of taking the Moderator's Chair was unworthy the occasion,—shallow, flippant, spiteful, tawdry, and vulgar.

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## MR BUCKLE ON CIVILISATION IN SCOTLAND.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, July 1861).

FROM several passages in this volume, it appears that Mr Buckle has a full sense of its importance, and that he anticipates much excitement and interest as the result of its publication. We notice this little trait of vanity and dogmatism, because we believe it explains a great deal of

\* *The History of Civilisation in England.* By Henry Thomas Buckle. Volume the Second. London.

the narrowness of mind which we find in it, and which led the author a year or two ago to treat Sir John Coleridge with a rudeness going far to destroy any pretensions that he may otherwise have had to the character of a gentleman. We hope the book *will* be read in Scotland, because intellectual inquiry is a good thing, *per se*, and stimulates the general intelligence. But though an essay on our history from a positivist point of view is a sufficient novelty to justify some curiosity about it, we warn the public to expect nothing so wonderful, or original, or important, as its author seems to think he has produced.

It is necessary, however, to state what Mr Buckle's "point of view" is, before we remark on the way in which he has applied his doctrine to Scottish history. Mr Buckle, then, in tracing the civilisation of any given country, leaves out as superfluous or exploded all consideration of Providence, to begin with; he makes no account of race; and he views religion and civil government as on the whole rather hindrances than otherwise to the general progress. This, it will be admitted, clears the ground wonderfully, and we naturally ask what is to supply the place of these ancient powers? Nor is Mr Buckle slow to give the answer. The physical conditions of life—the discoveries of philosophers—the growth of science—these forces, acting under the domination of an irresistible necessity, are the real civilisers of mankind. Political action proper having retarded their operations, Mr Buckle is in politics a friend of democracy, which, by favouring freedom, leaves the field open for his pet influences. Viewing the king, the noble, the priest, and the statesman as for the most part nuisances, Mr B. concentrates his affections on the philo-

sopher, and on the inductive or Baconian philosopher above all. History with him, then, is the science of human development as acted on by the influences above mentioned, operating *in spite* of the influences hitherto dealt with by the mass of historians; and, as the creature of such irresistible laws, man is gradually worked up into a civilised being out of barbarism. As far as his personality is concerned, meanwhile, *homo*, according to Mr Buckle, goes chiefly by his sense of his own personal interest; but whatever he thinks or fancies on the subject, he is a mere atom acted on by events, the sequence of which he may attain to tracing (when he ripens into Buckleism), but the power of which carries him along, a helpless and irresponsible item in the general mass.

So bold a doctrine as this, having a direct bearing on everyday questions of politics and religion, and expressed in a sufficiently readable style, naturally attracts attention. Nobody but a bigot will grudge Mr Buckle that attention, however much he may dislike either his doctrine, or his disagreeable way of putting it. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that there is anything new in the scheme. To remove SUPERNATURALISM, and substitute OBSERVATION (which is, after all, the key to it) is as old as Epicurus, and has been put by Lucretius into such language as Mr Buckle will never command:—

“Nam veluti pueri trepidant, atque omnia cæcis  
In tenebris metuunt: sic nos in luce timemus  
Interdum nihilo quæ sunt metuenda magis.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Hunc igitur terrorem animi, tenebrasque necesse est  
Non radii solis, neque lucida tela diei  
Discutiant, sed naturæ species ratioque.”



However, there is no need to go so far back; for the half-a-dozen writers on whom this author has formed himself are all of quite recent times. The basis of his system belongs to Comte, whom we observe him (though fond of quotation) to be shy of mentioning. Next to Comte, his greatest obligations are to Mill. His politics he has in common with Godwin and with Tom Paine,—the “Age of Reason,” by the last of whom, had a greater run in its day than the “History of Civilisation.” In short, Mr Buckle’s book is not a temple towards which other men have supplied the stones merely. It is rather a warehouse, where a certain order prevails, but where the materials have been supplied in complete readiness by different manufacturers. At the loftiest estimate, then, Mr Buckle could not claim a place with Hume or Berkeley, nor above Mackintosh and Dugald Stewart, allowing (what we do not allow) that his literary genius is equal to that of the last two. For he does not create a philosophy out of previous men’s hints, but helps himself to it ready made. Of course, this leaves him the praise of arrangement, and his arranging faculty shows a good deal of comprehensiveness. It leaves him, also, the praise of style. Even in style, however, he is below the highest standard of philosophical writing; and does not get beyond that respectable level of ease, fluency, and agreeable vigour which is now found in the better class of newspapers.

So much, then, for the general character of Mr Buckle’s views and talent. We have next to show how Scotland fits into his scheme. Scotland, we regret to say, is a kind of *whipping-boy* on this occasion. For Mr Buckle, highly indignant at the superstition and priestcraft which afflict

mankind, instead of exposing them in England (the history of which he is writing), crosses the Border, and uses Scotland as his "frightful example." We think this rather hard, because, allowing that the Scotch clergy have more power than the English, the English have quite enough to *illustrate his argument*, which is all that the present volume is intended to do. Indeed, if by "superstition," "theology," etc., our philosopher means Christianity generally (which we may fairly assume), England is quite as "bad" at bottom as Scotland, from his point of view. Rain is prayed for in English churches; damnation is preached from English pulpits; the "Essays and Reviews" are made in England the grounds of penal action, and so forth. The difference between the countries, in matters of this kind, is simply one of degree; and to rank Scotland with Spain, as contra-distinguished from England, is an unphilosophical exaggeration. What Mr Buckle was bound to do, and to do *in limine*, was to compare the whole existing civilisation of Scotland with that of England, and then to show how much of Scotland's inferiority (if she be inferior) is due to her ecclesiastical and theological peculiarities. A comparison of this kind would be very curious, and might be very valuable. But instead of making it, Mr Buckle—from the one assumption that the clergy have more power in Scotland—proceeds to treat our whole history as a kind of qualified misfortune; so that it is hard to tell whether he admits the country to be civilised or not. And certain we are of one thing, that *nobody can account, on Mr Buckle's own principles, for Scotland's having attained the degree of civilisation which belongs to her.* This will appear more clearly in the course of our review,

and, accordingly, is fatal to the permanent value of the book, which is vitiated, throughout, by the author's *a priori* intention to look at everything Scottish as spoiled by the national theology. To do Mr Buckle justice, he is above mere Cockney prejudices, and seems to have no national jealousies to affect his opinion of the Scottish character. *That* is not *his* failing; but he is determined that the country shall fit into his theory, and he lops it here, and hammers it flat there, so as in the long run to do us as much injustice as if he were a personal enemy.

The reader will be prepared to understand why Scotland is matched with Spain, and what Mr Buckle's opinion of her is, from the following passage :—

“ While, however, in regard to loyalty, the opposition between Scotland and Spain is complete, there is, strange to say, the most striking similarity between those countries in regard to superstition. Both nations have allowed their clergy to exercise immense sway, and both have submitted their actions, as well as their consciences, to the authority of the Church. As a natural consequence, in both countries intolerance has been, and still is, a crying evil; and in matters of religion, a bigotry is habitually displayed, discreditable indeed to Spain, but far more discreditable to Scotland, which has produced many philosophers of the highest eminence, who would willingly have taught the people better things, but who have vainly attempted to remove from the national mind that serious blemish which mars its beauty, and tends to neutralise its many other admirable qualities.

“ Herein lies the apparent paradox, and the real difficulty of Scotch history. *That knowledge should not have produced the effects which have elsewhere followed it; that a bold and inquisitive literature should be found in a grossly superstitious*

country, *without diminishing its superstition*; that the people should constantly withstand their kings, and as constantly succumb to their clergy; that while they are liberal in politics, they should be illiberal in religion; and that, as a natural consequence of all this, men who, in the visible and external department of facts and of practical life, display a shrewdness and a boldness rarely equalled, should nevertheless, in speculative life, and in matters of theory, tremble like sheep before their pastors, and yield assent to every absurdity they hear, provided their Church has sanctioned it; that these discrepancies should coexist, seems at first sight a strange contradiction, and is surely a phenomenon worthy of our careful study."

It will be seen—especially from our italics—that there is no mincing matters here. The writer postulates that knowledge has "not produced the effects which have elsewhere followed it," and that our old "superstitions" remain "undiminished." Were such a thing literally true, it would well deserve study, and we cannot blame Mr Buckle for trying to "account" for it. Unfortunately, the necessity of "accounting" for it makes him exaggerate or pervert for five hundred pages the doings of five hundred years.

He very early gives us one of his favourite geographical explanations of our superstition:—

"Whatever in any country increases the total amount of amazement, or whatever in any country increases the total amount of peril, has a direct tendency to increase the total amount of superstition, and therefore to strengthen the hands of the priesthood. By applying these principles to Scotland, we shall be able to explain several facts in the history of that country. In the first place, the features of its scenery offer a

marked contrast to those of England, and are much more likely, among an ignorant people, to suggest effective and permanent superstitions. The storms and the mists, the darkened sky flashed by frequent lightning, the peals of thunder reverberating from mountain to mountain, and echoing on every side, the dangerous hurricanes, the gusts sweeping the innumerable lakes with which the country is studded, the rolling and impetuous torrent flooding the path of the traveller and stopping his progress, are strangely different to those safer and milder phenomena, among which the English people have developed their prosperity, and built up their mighty cities."

Now, all these phenomena, as far as they are peculiar to Scotland, are Highland phenomena. They don't explain the Lowland history (which is the basis of Scottish civilisation) at all; and cannot be connected with the strength of the Presbyterian Church in modern times in any way.

The early interruptions to agriculture and the growth of trade by invasions (p. 166, *seq.*) were *real* practical influences in Scottish history. But this is a mere truism, and the remark has been made by everybody. At the very outset, however, Mr Buckle exaggerates the Scottish backwardness even of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He is consistent with himself when he omits all notice of the Saxon and Norman colonisation of the country, for that would land him under the operation of Race, which he ignores. But he might have found in Chalmers (for whom he has a just respect) many indications of a greater social advancement than he allows us. And he should not pass over in silence the Chartularies of our great religious houses, the lessons of which confirm this view, and teach



us our obligations to those old monks in whom Mr Buckle's narrowness sees nothing but their superstition.

It is, however, *necessary* to Mr Buckle to make the worst of everything in those distant times, because the greater the barbarism, the more easy to explain the power of the nobles and clergy, according to him. But this cuts two ways. The more barbarous the people, the more they needed nobles and clergy, and the greater their obligations to them. We do not find that Mr Buckle wishes that Scotland had failed in establishing her independence ; indeed, his language about the struggle is generous enough. But who led and organised that struggle, if not the nobles ? What would have become of Scotland's freedom, but for Robert Bruce and such as Robert Bruce,—the Douglasses, Lindsays, Maxwells, Setons, Campbells, Somervilles, Grahams :—

“ Thomas Randal and Hugh de la Hay,  
And good Sir David the Barclay ! ”

In estimating the value of an order, a supreme and transcendent service of this kind is not to be passed over. They were “ barbarous,” “ violent,” “ turbulent,” etc., no doubt. All that we readily admit. But such were the conditions of the time, and the great fact is that the nobles maintained their superiority, given the conditions. Their castles, of the strength of which this philosopher complains (p. 173, *note*), did, indeed, enable them to defy their own kings, but every such castle was an additional security that the country should not be permanently held by the invader. These are important offsets to the mischief they may have done from wantonness of power ; and look at their lines,

see the men they produced ! The Douglasses, besides innumerable warriors, like the Good Sir James or Archibald the Grim, have their Gawain the poet, their statesman the Regent, to be proud of. The Lindsays have warriors, poets, historians, statesmen, ecclesiastics of distinction, repeatedly. These were the model Scotsmen, the types of manhood on whom all Scotsmen formed themselves. One would think that a fact like this had something to do with the "civilisation" of a country in the highest sense. But the Buckle class of speculators see only one side of civilisation ; they forget that it does not consist only in a nation's having good bread and broadcloth, or even good physicians, stethoscopes, and collections of fossils, but also in its having patriotic and social traditions pervading it,—ideas of honour, loyalty, courtesy,—noble manners, and such elements. Let Mr Buckle deny if he can that the Scottish aristocracy, whose power he calls (p. 199) "a cruel malady," helped to give Scotland these. Let him also deny if he can that much was contributed to the formation of the national character in the same way, by the mediæval Church. No doubt, the Church *was* "superstitious ;" and no doubt, as it grew old and too rich, it grew corrupt. But here again we are to consider the offsets. A philosopher raised even one step above materialism will be glad that there *was* a Church which, whatever its superstitions, kept alive, in ages of rude life and little knowledge, a feeling of the Divine origin of nature and of the moral responsibility of man. Besides, a writer who insists so much on sequence and development, should allow for what the Church *prepared*,—*towards* the future. What learning there was, it handed down ; what schools and universities

there were, it founded and fostered. Had the Church not done well, after ages would not have been able to do better.

Mr Buckle, however, sees little in any mediæval institution but the harm it did; and such is human history, that instances of the harmful operation of institutions are easily gathered together for the amusement of the bigot or the fool. The whole sketch of the period before the Reformation in this book is ungenerous and unfair, and that of the Reformation itself (as we are now to show) curiously one-sided. Mr Buckle, seizing what he thinks the peculiar problem of Scotch history, pronounces it to be the union of liberal politics with illiberal religion. "That the people should constantly withstand their kings and as constantly succumb to their clergy," is the phenomenon which puzzles him. Now, on this theory, the discerning reader will observe, it is rather a difficult thing to account for the Reformation, so sweeping a Reformation, too, as it was! For, if the character of the Scotch makes them succumb always to priests, how came they to get rid of the old Catholic system in so wholesale a fashion in the sixteenth century? It would be mere trifling to urge that the same character made them turn against one set of priests, and next day begin worshipping another: a people instinctively Conservative in such matters sticks to those it has, as the Irish and other nations have stuck to theirs.

Our philosopher adopts a mode of escaping this contradiction which we fear will do him no good in the eyes of his Radical admirers. He gives the credit of the Scottish Reformation to the Scottish aristocracy. Of course, he does not mean this as a compliment. On the contrary,

he assumes that they acted from sordid motives. But, dwelling on the political jealousies previously, between nobles and clergy, he sees in the Reformation the revenge of the aristocracy on the hierarchy, and credits the former with a movement which the mass of the Scotch perhaps admire more heartily than any other in their history.

We need scarcely point out, that, if this be the true explanation of our Reformation, a greater testimony to the value of an aristocracy was never given than by the man who makes it, and, that making it, he stultifies his previous statement that the existence of the order was a mere "malady." But is it the true one?

That there is some truth in it (and Mr Buckle is always using partial truths in support of his preconceived theory), we readily agree. Indeed, when our dissenter-demagogues at the Tricentenary last autumn, talked the usual ecclesiastical Radicalism about 1560, we pointed out, in the *Courant*, their ingratitude to the gentlemen of that epoch, and reminded them of some facts which Mr Buckle here adduces. Mr Cunningham, too, and Mr Lorimer, among recent writers, have made remarks similar to ours. But had we said, as Mr Buckle says, that "the success or failure of the Reformation in Scotland was *simply* a question of the success or failure of the aristocratic power," we should have exaggerated. The nobles and people together were undoubtedly too strong for the Church, but that the nobles by themselves could have put down the Church, supposing the Church to have been backed by the people, is not at all so clear. Yet, on Mr Buckle's general theory of the Scottish character and condition, the people ought to have stuck to the Church. For they

always "succumb to their clergy." They were "excessively ignorant," and "excessively superstitious" (p. 232). But this superstitious and priest-ridden people really showed an animosity to the Church as genuine as the political and selfish animosity which Mr Buckle attributes to the nobles. The "raschall multitude," as Knox calls them, were foremost in the destruction of cathedrals and monasteries. They crowded to the satirical dramas of Sir David Lindsay. They rioted at every display of the ceremonies of the old worship. The people, in short, followed their noble leaders in this cause, as they had followed them in the War of Independence, because it was a cause which they themselves believed in.

So simple a view of affairs, however, does not do for Mr Buckle, because if he is not allowed his peculiar interpretation of this epoch, he cannot link together the chain of his theory of all the epochs. The contradictions in which he is thus involved are imperative on him, and his subsequent narrative exhibits the same faults. All clerical influence being with him the result of superstition, the Presbyterian Church is made to succeed the Catholic Church in everything but "name and form :"—

"The nobles had overturned the Church ; but the principles on which Church authority is based remained intact. All that was done was to change the name and the form. A new hierarchy was quickly organised, which succeeded the old one in the affections of the people. Indeed, it did more. For the Protestant clergy, neglected by the nobles, and unendowed by the State, had only a miserable pittance whereupon to live, and they necessarily threw themselves into the arms of the people, where alone they could find support and sympathy. Hence, a



closer and more intimate union than would otherwise have been possible. Hence, too, as we shall presently see, the Presbyterian clergy, smarting under the injustice with which they were treated, displayed that hatred of the upper classes, and that peculiar detestation of monarchical government, which they showed whenever they dared. In their pulpits, in their Presbyteries, and in their General Assemblies, they encouraged a democratic and insubordinate tone, which eventually produced the happiest results, by keeping alive, at a critical moment, the spirit of liberty; but which, for that very reason, made the higher ranks rue the day when, by their ill-timed and selfish parsimony, they roused the wrath of so powerful and implacable a class."

It is assumed, from this point, that the new clergy have been like, say, the Spanish clergy, in all but title. Their sole redeeming characteristic was, that it being their interest to preach democracy, they kept alike a spirit of freedom. This atones, thinks Mr Buckle, for their brutal rudeness to James the Sixth, and partly makes up for the superstition in which they have since kept their countrymen :—

"The evidence which has been collected proves that the Presbyterian ministers carried their violence against the constituted authorities of the State to an indecent, if not to a criminal length; and we cannot absolve them from the charge of being a restless and unscrupulous body, greedy after power, and grossly intolerant of whatever opposed their own views. Still, the real cause of their conduct was, the spirit of their age, and the peculiarities of their position. None of us can be sure that, if we were placed exactly as they were placed, we should have acted differently. Now, indeed, we cannot read of their proceedings, as they are recorded in their own Assemblies, and by the historians of their own Church, without an uneasy feeling

of dislike, I had almost said of disgust, at finding ourselves in presence of so much of superstition, of chicanery, of low, sordid arts, and yet, withal, of arrogant and unbridled insolence. The truth, however, is, that in Scotland the age was evil, and the evil rose to the surface. The times were out of joint, and it was hard to set them right. The long prevalence of anarchy, of ignorance, of poverty, of force, of fraud, of domestic tumult, and of foreign invasion, had reduced Scotland to a state which it is scarcely possible for us to realise. . . .

"Much they did which excites our strongest aversion. But one thing they achieved, which should make us honour their memory, and repute them benefactors of their species. At a most hazardous moment they kept alive the spirit of national liberty. What the nobles and the crown had put in peril, that did the clergy save. . . .

"It was they who taught their countrymen to scrutinise, with a fearless eye, the policy of their rulers. It was they who pointed the finger of scorn at kings and nobles, and laid bare the hollowness of their pretensions. They ridiculed their claims, and jeered at their mysteries. They tore the veil, and exposed the tricks of the scene which lay behind. The great ones of the earth, they covered with contempt; and those who were above them, they cast down. Herein, they did a deed which should compensate for all their offences, even were their offences ten times as great. By discountenancing that pernicious and degrading respect which men are too apt to pay to those whom accident, and not merit, has raised above them, they facilitated the growth of a proud and sturdy independence, which was sure to do good service at a time of need."

It is no compliment to democracy, we may observe here, that it should have involved the permanent degradation of the country.

The Scotch nobility having for their own ends made a

Reformation, and having refused to bestow the church lands on the reformed clergy—these last (says Mr Buckle) threw themselves on the people as democrats, and thus acquired the power over them which they used so long for their degradation. The connection thus established between Scottish democracy and Scottish superstition will be piquant to many. Not that there is anything new in it, for it is substantially the same kind of thing that has often been said by our Episcopalian poleemics, by Lawson, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and so forth. There is no doubt a share of truth in the view, as we have had to remark about other of the generalisations which Mr Buckle has helped himself to, for his own purposes. But that is all; and we need not say that sound philosophies are not to be made by stretching bits of truth out, and piecing them together in this fashion. To quote Clarendon when you want to discredit a Covenanter, and then again Wodrow when you want to damage a Cavalier, is convenient, but hardly fair; and this is Mr Buckle's custom throughout. Truth lies between party extremes, and is not to be found in bits of invective like the following :—

“When the Scotch Kirk was at the height of its power, we may search history in vain for any institution which can compete with it, except the Spanish Inquisition. Between these two there is a close and intimate analogy. Both were intolerant, both were cruel, both made war upon the finest parts of human nature, and both destroyed every vestige of religious freedom. One difference, however, there was, of vast importance. In political matters, the Church, which was servile in Spain, was rebellious in Scotland. Hence, the Scotch always had one direction in which they could speak and act with unrestrained liberty. In politics, they found their vent. There

the mind was free. And this was their salvation. This saved them from the fate of Spain, by securing to them the exercise of those faculties which otherwise would have lain dormant, if, indeed, they had not been entirely destroyed by that long and enfeebling servitude in which their clergy retained them, and from which, but for this favourable circumstance, no escape would have been open."

An historical student, whether Presbyterian or not, soon learns to recognise in such passages as this, the spirit not of the philosopher but of the pamphleteer. He must be a dull fellow, indeed, if he does not see that there was another "difference" of "vast importance" between Kirk and Inquisition besides that here pointed out. The Kirk was powerful, not by dint of a "secular arm" ever ready to help it, but by dint of the hold which it gained for itself over the popular mind. A clergy, many of whom were low-born men of small culture, were of course often extravagant and brutal, and the Presbyterian Church has been vexed by the pretensions of such men all along. But it is useless to dwell on these features of the body. We should rather inquire what good they were able to do, in spite of their own disadvantages, and those of their country's condition at that time?

Mr Buckle allows them to have done no good, except as far as they were rebels in politics. But the spirit of political freedom is older in Scotland than Presbyterianism. Buchanan's "*De Jure Regni*" was published before Andrew Melville's return from Geneva. And the spirit of that treatise is classical, not religious, aristocratic rather than democratic. Like all sound early liberalism, that of Buchanan was a mixture of the feudal with the classical

idea; and what precedents he had for his doctrine of Scottish popular rights he derived from the stands made by the nobles against the kings. There was, indeed, an amount of intellectual activity among the Scottish literary class,—long prior to the days of Jenny Geddes,—for which Mr Buckle nowhere gives them credit. Joseph Scaliger, who had visited Edinburgh (little as that fact is known), observes in the “Scaligerana,” that *les Ecossais sont bons philosophes*; and it is by no means clear that we should have been reduced to servitude even if James and Charles had succeeded in establishing Episcopacy. The Kirk is entitled to the credit of resisting the Stuarts, no doubt; but we cannot agree with Mr Buckle that this was her supreme service, and that all her domestic action was purely mischievous.

Let us see what Mr Buckle's opinions of the Church's doings at home in the seventeenth century are.

His main proposition is, that the new or reformed clergy were just the old priests in another shape,—preaching “a system which aimed at destroying all human happiness,”—overturning the right of “private judgment,”—and so on; and he introduces them to us in this fashion :—

“How they laboured to corrupt the national intellect, and how successful they were in that base vocation, has been hitherto known to no modern reader; because no one has had the patience to peruse their interminable discourses, commentaries, and the other religious literature in which their sentiments are preserved. As, however, the preachers were, in Scotland, more influential than all other classes put together, it is only by comparing their statements with what is to be found in the general memoirs and correspondence of the time,



that we can at all succeed in reconstructing the history of a period, which, to the philosophic student of the human mind, is full of great, though melancholy, interest. I shall, therefore, make no apology for entering into still further details respecting these matters; and I hope to put the reader in possession of such facts as will connect the past history of Scotland with its present state, and will enable him to understand why it is that so great a people are, in many respects, still struggling in darkness, simply because they still live under the shadow of that long and terrible night which, for more than a century, covered the land. It will also appear that their hardness and moroseness of character, their want of gaiety, and their indifference to many of the enjoyments of life, are traceable to the same cause, and are the natural product of the gloomy and ascetic opinions inculcated by their religious teachers. For in that age, as in every other, the clergy, once possessed of power, showed themselves harsh and unfeeling masters. They kept the people in a worse than Egyptian bondage, inasmuch as they enslaved mind as well as body, and not only deprived men of innocent amusements, but taught them that those amusements were sinful. And so thoroughly did they do their work, that, though a hundred and fifty years have elapsed since their supremacy began to wane, the imprint of their hands is everywhere discernible. The people still bear the marks of the lash; the memory of their former servitude lives among them; and they crouch before their clergy as they did of old, abandoning their rights, sacrificing their independence, and yielding up their consciences to the dictates of an intolerant and ambitious priesthood."

He then goes on to extract, from the writings of the Presbyterian divines of the seventeenth century, everything that is most gloomy and rigid, and especially all their instances of "particular providences," which he gloats over

as bits of superstition. This is done with very commendable industry,—though not more than other writers bestow on *their* tasks, without bragging of it in Mr Buckle's peculiar fashion. But—leaving the theologians to defend what is specially theological (and *at bottom* Mr Buckle's quarrel is as much with the Bishops of Exeter or Oxford as with any Presbyterian minister)—we say that he is not *philosophically* fair in the way he does his work. For instance, it makes all the difference between two kinds of “superstition” whether they rest on authority, or appeal to a common standard. A superstition that acts through ceremonies is much more noxious, intellectually, than a superstition that acts through sermons. The “Pardoner” who, in Sir David Lindsay's poem, offers to the populace for sale—

“The tail-part of St Bride's cow,  
The snout of old St Antony's sow,  
Whilk bore his holy bell,”

degraded his hearers far more than the minister who, terrifying *his* with the example of Ananias, at all events appealed for authority to a book which the man could consult for himself. Mr Buckle should give to the Bible *as a book* the same fair play that he gives to the “Wealth of Nations.” And the Bible, considered from a literary point of view, assuredly holds a high place in education, and cannot have permeated the Scottish intellect, as it did in the seventeenth century, without both exercising and enriching it. It may be true that the overwhelming attention paid by that century to theology retarded the growth both of literature (including philosophy) and trade. This is a charge which was made against it long before

Mr Buckle's days. But Nature works by action and reaction,—by giving us too much of a thing at one time, and too little at another. The predominance of a severe religiosity in that age spiritualised the people preparatory to the great trade development of later ages. We would rather see a populace too deeply tinged with Calvinism, than a populace in whom all sense of the unseen world and the infinite was dulled by the mere roar of steam-engines and crowded streets.

The fact is that the seventeenth century was pre-eminently both religious and superstitious, in England as well as Scotland. Laud was a believer in dreams; and Charles the First, it is well known, felt disturbed when the gold head of his cane broke off in his hand. Mr Buckle accumulates instances of the superstitions of the poor preachers, here, which we could easily match from the memoirs of great gentlemen and ladies in the South. For instance, Lady Bacon, the philosopher's mother, writes to her son Antony,—

“Alas! what excess of bucks at Gray's Inn, and to feast it on the Sabbath. God forgive and have mercy upon England!”

How Buckle grins when he picks a passage of this sort out of Rutherford or Dickson! Yet Lady Bacon was a woman of the highest cultivation, and knew, we suspect, more Greek (for one thing) than Buckle himself. She writes again,—

“One of the prophets, Nahum, I think, saith that the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind; the storm, and tempest, and clouds are the dust of his feet. *The wind hath had great power; it hath thrown off a number of tiles, some fruit trees,*” etc.

The man who *sneers* at this kind of piety in his

ancestors,—among whom it was unfeigned and genuine,—may possibly be a philosopher, but we are quite certain that, whether or no, he is a snob.

We now give, as belonging to this part of the subject, a curious specimen of the way in which Mr Buckle does injustice to the Scotch clergy while exposing their peculiar superstitions:—

“It was, moreover, wrong to take pleasure in beautiful scenery; for a pious man had no concern with such matters, which were beneath him, and the admiration of which should be left to the unconverted. The unregenerate might delight in these vanities, *but they who were properly instructed saw Nature as she really was*, and knew that as she, for about five thousand years, had been constantly on the move, *her vigour was well-nigh spent, and her pristine energy had departed*. To the eye of ignorance, she still seemed fair and fresh; the fact, however, was, that she was worn out and decrepit; she was suffering from extreme old age; her frame, no longer elastic, was leaning on one side, and she soon would perish. Owing to the sin of man, all things were getting worse, and nature was degenerating so fast, that already the lilies were losing their whiteness, and the roses their smell. The heavens were waxing old; the very sun, which lighted the earth, was becoming feeble. This universal degeneracy was sad to think of; but the profane knew it not. Their ungodly eyes were still pleased by what they saw. Such was the result of their obstinate determination to indulge the senses, all of which were evil; the eye being, beyond comparison, the most wicked. Hence, it was especially marked out for divine punishment; and, being constantly sinning, it was afflicted with fifty-two different diseases—that is, one disease for each week in the year.

“On this account, it was improper to care for beauty of any kind; or, to speak more accurately, there was no real beauty.

The world afforded nothing worth looking at save and except the Scotch Kirk, which was incomparably the most beautiful thing under heaven."

We can fancy a dabbler in literature chuckling over this, and admiring the wonderful research with which "the great Buckle" has brought to light some of the strange Scottish superstitions of the past. But now turn to Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" (Ed. P. Cunningham, vol. i., p. 119), and read the following from his Life of Milton:—

"There prevailed in his (Milton's) time an opinion that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of Nature. It was suspected that the whole creation languished; and that everything was daily sinking into gradual diminution."

And this opinion Johnson supposes Milton himself to have been influenced by. So little fair is it to suppose such fancies peculiar to the Scotch clergy, or invented by them for their own profit.

Mr Buckle may reassure himself, after reading all the horrors in which he has just been revelling. Nature cannot be expelled even by a Presbyterian *furca*. The same men who made such awfully strict regulations for the government of their flocks have left on record complaints which sufficiently show their want of complete success. The generation which Mr Buckle pictures as wretched ascetics, broken down by priestly tyranny, produced the best existing translation of Rabelais; imported a most respectable *quantum* of French wine; fought admirably; and were, in every way, one of the manliest breeds of men in Europe. A nineteenth century book-worm, passing his life between libraries and clubs, is hardly entitled



to doubt the general virility of those who conquered at Marston Moor, or those who fought against Claverhouse. It is sheer impudence to talk of the character of a people as "dwarfed and mutilated," which could do what the Scotch did from 1600 to 1700.

After all, the proof of the pudding, as the saying is, lies in the eating. We admit that a batch of queer old Covenanting pamphlets may be of great value in showing the tendencies of a time. And we admit that the Kirk discipline of the country has considerably checked the more brilliant elements in the Scotch people. But Mr Buckle—true to his essentially unfair, and, therefore, unphilosophical character—has never once alluded to any but the darker features of our national life. He never says a word of the Scottish ballads or Scottish music. He never mentions a Scottish poet or humourist—not Burns, nor Smollett, nor even Scott. But, what is far more extraordinary, he quite ignores what many greater men than himself have thought the most noticeable feature in Scottish history,—the good education, and personal superiority, at an early period, of the Scotch working classes. Macaulay kept himself carefully free from anything like Scottish feeling, but even he has spoken of this phenomenon, once or twice, with something approaching to enthusiasm. If Buckle does not believe in the phenomenon, he is bound to tell us why. If he does believe in it, he is bound to reconcile it with the deplorable picture he draws of the training of the Scottish people. There is one part of that training from which he might advantageously borrow a not yet exploded precept, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

The difficulty of understanding how Scotland ever became civilised, on Mr Buckle's view of her history, grows greater as we draw near the conclusion of his book. We have seen that, according to his showing, she had little chance of it, down to about 1700. The nobles had been beasts of prey; the Reformation a mere change of superstitions; trade and science had yet to rise, and so forth. But when we reach the epoch of the Union, and when we find Hutcheson and Hume in due course appearing, we expect to find the writer taking a more cheerful tone. Not he. He admires our philosophers infinitely, but even they—the salt of the earth—had been spoiled by the parsons. They might be sceptical, and were. But the popular mind was so steeped in theology, that philosophers themselves became “deductive” instead of “inductive,” and never produced their proper effect on the people accordingly. This is Mr Buckle's “key” to the eighteenth century in Scotland, as he tells us in the following passage:—

“Over grammar schools the clergy possessed an authority fully equal to that which they had in the universities. They also appointed and removed, at their own pleasure, teachers of every grade, from village schoolmasters to tutors in private families. In this way, each generation, as it arose, was brought under their influence, and made subject to their notions. Taking the mind of Scotland while it was young and flexible, they bent it to their own method. Hence, that method became supreme; it reigned everywhere; not a voice was lifted up against it; and no one had an idea that there was more than one path by which truth could be reached, or that the human understanding was of any use, except to deal deductively with premises, which were not to be inductively examined.

“The inductive or analytic spirit being thus unknown, and

the deductive or synthetic spirit being alone favoured, it happened that, when, early in the eighteenth century, the circumstances already mentioned gave rise to a great intellectual movement, that movement, though new in its results, was not new in the method by which the results were obtained. A secular philosophy was, indeed, established, and the ablest men, instead of being theological, became scientific. But so completely had the theological plan occupied Scotland, that even philosophers were unable to escape from its method, and, as I am about to show, the inductive method exercised no influence over them. This most curious fact is the key to the history of Scotland in the eighteenth century, and explains many events which would otherwise appear incompatible with each other. . . . In that country, men have always been deductive; even the most liberal thinkers being unable to liberate themselves from the universal tendency, and being forced to accept a method which time had consecrated, and which was interwoven with all the associations of the national mind."

And what he thinks the result has been, another quotation shall exhibit. We use italics now and then to draw attention to the moderation, the politeness, the nice exactitude of statement, so eminently characteristic of Mr Buckle. It is of some importance to know what are the manners, and what the scrupulousness, of the kind of people who expect to substitute *their* authority for that of gentlemen and of clergymen:—

"Early in the eighteenth century, a movement was felt all over Europe, and in that movement Scotland participated. A spirit of inquiry was abroad, so general and so searching that no country could entirely escape from its action. Sanguine men were excited, and even grave men were stirred. It seemed as if a long night were about to close. Light broke forth where before there was nothing but darkness. Opinions which had

stood the test of ages were suddenly questioned ; and in every direction doubts sprung up, and proofs were demanded. The human mind, waxing bold, would not be satisfied with the old evidence. Things were examined at their foundation, and the basis of every belief was jealously scrutinised. For a time, this was confined to the higher intellects ; but soon the movement spread, and, in the most advanced countries, worked upon nearly all classes. In England and in France the result was extremely beneficial. It might have been hoped, that in Scotland likewise, the popular mind would gradually have become enlightened. But not so. Time rolled on ; one generation succeeded another ; the eighteenth century passed away ; the nineteenth century came ; and still the people made no sign. *The gloom of the middle ages was yet upon them.* While all around was light, the Scotch, enveloped in mist, crept on, groping their way, dismally, and with fear. While other nations were shaking off their old superstitions, this singular people clung to theirs with undiminished tenacity. Now, indeed, their grasp is gradually slackening, but with extreme slowness, and threatening reactions frequently appear. This, as it always has been, and still is, the curse of Scotland, so also is it the chief difficulty with which the historian of Scotland has to contend. Everywhere else, when the rise of the intellectual classes, and that of the trading and manufacturing classes, have accompanied each other, the invariable result has been a diminution of the power of the clergy, and, consequently, a diminution of the influence of superstition. The peculiarity of Scotland is, that, during the eighteenth century, and even down to the middle of the nineteenth century, the industrial and intellectual progress has continued without materially shaking the authority of the priesthood. Strange and unequalled combination ! The country of bold and enterprising merchants, of shrewd manufacturers, of far-seeing men of business, and of cunning artificers ; the country, too, of such fearless thinkers as George Buchanan, David Hume, and Adam Smith, is awed by a few noisy and

*ignorant preachers*, to whom it allows a license, and yields a submission, disgraceful to the age, and incompatible with the commonest notions of liberty. A people in many respects very advanced, and holding upon political subjects enlightened views, do, upon all religious subjects, display a littleness of mind, an illiberality of sentiment, a heat of temper, and a love of persecuting others, which shows that the Protestantism of which they boast has done them *no good*; that, in the most important matters, it has left them as narrow as it found them; and that it has been unable to free them from prejudices which make them the laughing-stock of Europe, *and which have turned the very name of the Scotch Kirk into a byword and a reproach among educated men.*"

The first thing that strikes one about this theory is, that Mr Buckle has neglected to point out *the connection* between the influence of our theologians, and our philosophers' love of deduction. He says that one flowed from the other, but he does not explain why or how. Now, it is absurd to assume the omnipotence of even a clergy like the Scotch clergy of older times. Their severity did not blight the gaiety of Dr Pitcairne, nor the geniality of Allan Ramsay, any more than their Whiggism prevented Ruddiman or Goodall from being Jacobites. And, it is especially far-fetched to make their influence explain the partiality of Hutcheson or Hume for deduction, since that partiality is explicable in an easier and more natural way. A man of sense, not bent on "accounting for" an assumption taken up beforehand and itself an exaggeration, finds himself in no such necessity of resorting to paradoxes. *He* sees in Hutcheson and Hume men naturally falling into their places in the history of British philosophy, and exercising as much influence over their countrymen as philosophers



can expect to do. Take Hutcheson for example,—and you can easily understand his point of view by noting that he belonged to the generation which just succeeded to Shaftesbury, and was just contemporary with Butler. Dr Carlyle, who was at Glasgow when Hutcheson was a professor, observes that he was always quoting Shaftesbury. ("Autobiography," p. 85). And his doctrine, that "all men have a moral faculty which is an original principle," is also the doctrine of Butler, who treats "virtue" as "a natural law" of humanity, in his "Sermons on Human Nature." Such similarities of view are naturally found in contemporaries; and if Hutcheson had been determined in his way of thinking by merely Scotch-Presbyterian influences, as these appear in the eyes of a Buckle, he would never have derived anything from Shaftesbury at all. He took to philosophy, just as an Englishman might have done, and was acted upon, as everybody is, more or less, by the current of thought flowing in his time. Hume, in the same way, was acted upon by Berkeley. But it does not follow, for all that, that men like Hume achieved none of their work by induction, as a careless reader would gather from Mr Buckle. It is true, as Mr Buckle says, that Hume's "Natural History of Religion" is a deductive or *à priori* argument. But take his famous essay "On the Populousness of Ancient Nations," the effect of which (as Mr Hill Burton \* has remarked) was felt in our economical literature down to and beyond the time of Malthus, and what do we find him doing there? Just carefully gather-

\* Mr Buckle has borrowed freely from this valuable writer, and shows his gratitude—and discrimination—by bracketing him as a historian with Mr Robert Chambers.

ing together such facts recorded by the classic writers as would throw light on the question which he was discussing. Bacon himself could not have wished an induction more carefully performed than this, in the course of which the great David (a descendant of one of the noble families whose existence was "a malady") examined nearly all the surviving literature of antiquity. Mr Buckle professes unbounded admiration for Hume, as well he may, but of course sees nothing in him that does not suit his own theory. Once, indeed, he speaks rather slightly of his classical learning. This is rich in an author who tells us (pp. 400, 401) that the Stoic philosophers "have never possessed authority," and who therefore may be assumed to be in total ignorance of the existence of so famous a man as the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

Let us now see whether these Scotch philosophers had no influence on Scotland, and whether she remained "enveloped in mist" during the last century, as our pedant pretends. We shall first quote Dr Carlyle,—a thoroughly intelligent man,—on Hutcheson's influence:—

"It was owing to Hutcheson and him [Leechman] that *a new school* was formed in the western provinces of Scotland, where the clergy *till that period* were narrow and bigoted."

We next turn to Hume's Essays,—written in the first half of last century, and find him saying:—

"Our sectaries, who were formerly such dangerous bigots, are now become very free reasoners."—"Of Superstition and Enthusiasm").

Next we take up the "Wealth of Nations," which was in progress some thirty years later than the date of this

Essay; and Adam Smith is found talking (book v., cap. 1) of "WHATEVER REMAINS" of "the old fanatical spirit,"—showing that not much was left of it then. But Adam Smith is Mr Buckle's greatest of all Scotchmen,—so we shall treat the reader to a specimen of the harmony between their opinions of the Scottish Church:—

"There is scarce perhaps to be found anywhere in Europe a more learned, decent, independent, and respectable set of men than the greater part of the Presbyterian clergy of Holland, Geneva, Switzerland, and SCOTLAND."—("Wealth of Nations," *ubi sup.*)

Adam Smith was not the man to have spoken in this tone of a body of fanatics.

But why multiply such quotations? There is one fact which everybody knows about the Church of Scotland in the last century, that the Moderate party, headed by Robertson, was predominant in it. This fact is fatal to Mr Buckle's "fanatical" theory alone. The Moderate men had their faults, but the Church was never so socially and intellectually powerful as during their ascendancy. And the names of that party's leaders,—Robertson, Blair, Campbell, MacKnight, Carlyle, are the only names of the Presbyterian divines of last century which now live in the general history or literature of the British empire.

The rise of trade and the improvement of agriculture in Scotland after the Union give Mr Buckle an occasion for some of his favourite hits at the Scotch aristocracy. He talks of their "overthrow" (p. 312), a sufficiently absurd expression when we remember what their position is even now. And he calls this overthrow elsewhere "a fortunate circumstance" (p. 307). Unluckily for Mr Buckle, it can

be proved that the Scotch aristocracy took the lead in the social improvement of the country, precisely as they had done in the Reformation and in the War of Independence. He is fond of quoting Mr Chambers's "Domestic Annals of Scotland,"—a book which does not, indeed, entitle its author to rank with original historians, but which is both valuable and interesting. He might have found there, if truth had been his object, that "the first notable attempt at planting was by Thomas, Sixth Earl of Haddington," that "Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk" was "another early improver," and so on, *ad lib.* ("Dom. Ann.," vol. iii., p. 417). Mr Chambers, in fact, points out, that it was Lady Elizabeth Mordaunt, wife of the heir of the Duke of Gordon of that time, who first set improvements going at all. He describes the establishment in 1723 of "A Society for Improving in the Knowledge of Agriculture;" and who was "the animating spirit of the fraternity?" ("Dom. Ann.," vol. iii., p. 484). Why, a Maxwell of Gallo-way, whose associates in the good work were the Marquis of Lothian, the Earl of Kinnoull, Lord Elibank, Sir George Dunbar of Mochrum, etc., etc. Mr Buckle sets a high value on statistics; he ought therefore to know, that the Father of Statistics in Scotland was Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, the chief of a family still esteemed amongst us for the talents and good-nature of its members.

Agricultural—rather than commercial—improvement is the proper business of an aristocracy. Yet, the second Bank ever established in Scotland was established on the strength of the support of the Earl of Ilay in 1727. "Domestic Annals," vol. iii., p. 537). The most improving Provost ever known in Edinburgh—Drummond—

belonged to the Perth family. The great Virginia trade of Glasgow was frequently recruited from the west-country gentry. By what right does Mr Buckle ignore or despise such facts as these?

It is indeed well known to students of genealogy (and nobody else can speak with authority on the subject), that on the whole the Scottish aristocracy has produced a larger proportion of the eminent men of the kingdom than any aristocracy in Europe. Our best soldiers, sailors, authors, and judges have belonged to it; which helps to explain, and to excuse (if it needed excuse) the vein of *feudalism* still running through the country, in spite of the liberalism in which Mr Buckle exults, and the fanaticism which he exaggerates. It is especially fortunate that there should always have been a feeling of this kind to help to reconcile the Scottish people to their leaders; for nothing can be more certain than that the ascendancy of the populace at any time would have perilled the very progress which, and which alone, excites Mr Buckle's admiration. The Union itself could never have passed under a system of universal suffrage. And, when Robertson laboured in 1778 to induce people to consent to abolishing the penal laws against the Catholics, his house had to be protected from the mob by soldiers. (See Cunningham's "Church History of Scotland," vol. ii., p. 547).

We must now bring our examination of this work to a close. We have shown what Mr Buckle's general theory of the history of Scotland is, at a length as great as the limits of a newspaper permit. We venture to think, too, that we have shown its incompleteness; its failure to



account for the actual civilisation of Scotland as it exists; and the unfair partiality with which the known facts of history have been handled for its construction. Our great complaint is, that he exaggerates the importance of particular classes of phenomena in order to serve the cause of his theory. There is often some truth in what he says, but it is not the whole truth; and many truths equally important with those which he does use, are not recognised in his book at all. In conclusion, we need hardly say that we have no wish to defend any existing evil which he may have touched on. There is to be found, among nobler characteristics, in Scotland, a more marked predominance of the uglier features of ecclesiastical influence, than readily appears on the surface of life in some other countries. This has been a hundred times remarked upon by Scotsmen themselves; and is to be attributed, we believe, where it exists, to the democratic character of our ecclesiastical life. On the other hand, it is not an unmixed evil; and a philosopher may well put up with its inconveniences, when he remembers that religious democracy has after all proved compatible with Scottish civilisation such as it is, and that *irreligious* democracy means Jacobinism. We may be offended now and then by the violence and the narrowness which we now meet chiefly (let us be thankful) among the Presbyterian dissenters. We may wish for a higher standard of scholarship, and a more beautiful standard of manners. But we will not therefore rush for relief into the arms of a school of materialist speculators, the acceptance of whose views involves difficulties as great as those of our existing system, and who ask us, by way of a preliminary qualification for

their academy, to believe that our ancestors have never been anything but barbarians or bigots, or the dupes of both.

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## L O R D B U R Y.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, December 1860).

LORD BURY has promised the people of Wick a harbour of refuge ; and in the meantime, he has found in their Burghs a harbour of refuge himself. Having been unseated for bribery at Norwich, he came down to get rid of the odour of corruption in the healthy breezes of the far North. It was a compliment to Scotland, and ought to be acknowledged. A Scottish candidate with a pure political reputation would perhaps have been better. But the Wick Burghs must take what they can get, and they might do worse than drink their political small beer at the respectable sign of the "Keppel's Head."

We have no very great objections to Lord Bury. He is what is called a nice young man, and is even rather clever, we believe. We have a vague recollection that, in coming home from Canada, he got up a periodical among the passengers ; which itself indicated a pleasant album-writing and keepsake-reading turn of mind. In fact, our object to-day—besides that of congratulating him on getting a less expensive seat than Norwich—is to hold him up as a

type of the clever young Whig lord. It has been complained that there are no young Whigs coming up, and this gives serious uneasiness to the "great Liberal party." If the Whig aristocracy should fail, judging from all appearances, the Church must go without Bishops, and the State without Ministers. All patriotic men, then, are interested in preserving the noble breed, and we confess we hate to see a heartless Radical attacking the "old women" of the party, as he calls them; for what is that but shooting the hens?

Now it is a great point to have secured Lord Bury. He is so active, that he was down at Wick almost before people of less information knew that Mr Laing was to resign. He went there with so little dependence on aristocratic influence, that he absolutely did not call on the Duke of Sutherland first, and ask him for his support. He was there before the Duke wrote, expressing his "good wishes" in his behalf. We don't hear, indeed, who asked the Duke to do so much, but his Grace, we are also told, "declined to interfere" in the election. How nice of his Grace, not to profess that he was going to break the law, which he would have been doing in such a case! And how innocent and maidenish even, the notion that the mere "good wishes" of the Duke of Sutherland, in black and white, counted for nothing in the Wick Burghs! This it is—in spite of one's naughty Norwich experience—to be of a pure and spotless kind of character. Another man would have turned up "Dod;" found that a factor of the Sutherland family had represented the place for twenty-two years; and said as little about his own relations to the Duke as possible. But this is the superiority the Whig aristocrat

has over a coarser kind of fellow. He does things delicately. If he bribes, it is in kid gloves. Against malodorous corruption, he arms himself with a pastille. And if he pelts a Tory gentleman, it is at least with rotten plover's eggs. It is astonishing how this delicacy succeeds. The people like "rose-water Radicalism," and never suspect that the smell of the thing is the best of it.

In rose-water Radicalism, Lord Bury is as abundant as the finest young Whigs. The Wick Burghs, if we mistake not, contain a somewhat Radical population, rather seriously inclined. The right man, under such circumstances, is a strong Liberal who is also of an austere turn. But Lord Bury only goes "the whole hog"—in sugar—an object we sometimes see in the sweetmeat shops. He is an out-and-out Liberal in general professions, but extremely safe and cautious when you take him into details. He is for extending the suffrage, of course; but when you ask how, or in what degree, you puzzle him. The measure, he says, ought "not to be so niggard as to exclude the great portion of the intelligent working classes," nor "so sweeping as entirely to destroy the present power of the middle classes." If Lord Bury were told of somebody, that he was not so tall as "Jacob Omnium," nor yet so short as Lord John Russell, he would find it difficult to fix his height; and we can fancy an honest cobbler of Kirkwall, a non-elect, wondering whether the glib young gentleman meant that *he* ought to have a vote or no. But one thing is clear. The Viscount can't abide real Radicalism, and, of course, he has his fling at Mr Bright, who, now that the Whigs are "in," is a regular cockshy of theirs. It is not for us to defend the great

demagogue, and a harpoon is ready for him in the bows of the *Courant* whenever he comes up to spout. But, that men who are really trading on popular love of change, who would like to be thought friends of extensive innovation, who, if a Conservative stood against them, would pass the word for democracy,—that these men should always be hammering away at the cleverest democrat in the kingdom,—is too bad. Besides, in some pretty little orators, it is almost impudent. What Bright is, compared with Chatham or Burke, we know; but, compared with the general Whiglins, he is a vulture to a cock-sparrow. A Conservative uses shot against *him*, that he would never use against Lord Bury, for fear of spoiling him for stuffing.

But Lord Bury had other things to talk about besides the necessity of a homœopathic reform at an indefinite period. He had to give his views on education; and dissent being powerful in those parts, he naturally professed his wish to open the schools. With a politeness to the Church of Scotland, which we should be very sorry to see any Scotchman imitate towards the Church of England, he expressed his belief that “a teacher” ought not “to be excluded from our schools, because he does not belong to one particular sect.” “Great cheering” followed at this point, according to the *Northern Ensign*. Some of the mob may have thought that they had got hold of a bigot, but his Lordship is only a free-and-easy-going Whig, superior to ecclesiastical prejudices. He is for opening the schools to all denominations whatever, and our Free Church friends will appreciate the fact, as one more sign that there is no alternative but that, if the pre-



sent system be destroyed. Any change, in short, will be made, not "in the spirit of John Knox," but in that of Mr Robert Lowe. And Lord Bury's views on such subjects may be gathered from a pet scheme of his, which nothing, doubtless, but his great modesty prevented him from dwelling on at this election. Lord Bury, after all, is chiefly known by his devotion to the cause of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. A clever young man of his calibre generally enters on public life now-a-days with a crotchet, and the best sort of crotchet is one opposed to an existing law. There are fellows that would marry their grandmothers, if the old ladies themselves had not the sense to see the wisdom of the prohibition. So, there will always be some people desiring to do what custom and instinct and precept forbid, and of a class of these Lord Bury has been the defender. When will he bring up a good fat petition from his new constituents in favour of his cherished scheme?

But enough of this. Our object was to congratulate Lord Bury and his party, and we must not lose sight of it. We say, then, that so nice a young nobleman, with such mild agreeable liberal views (not a headache in a hogshead of them) is a great accession to the Whigs, now that he is restored to Parliament. We wish them joy of him. And we venture to claim some credit for Scotland in the matter; too. Scotland has long been a country where English politicians—exhausted by the smell of the Thames and the eloquence of the metropolitan members—come for health and recreation. But a new field of usefulness is opening to us. When any obstinate Parliamentary Election Committee persists in turning out an English

member for,—we won't repeat the word,—but we all know what,—let us always have a place ready for him, and let us not think of bothering him with an opposition! The stupid people at Norwich want our politeness, and so they put this young gentleman to a great deal of unnecessary expense.

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## THE SCOTTISH SUNDAY QUESTION.

*(Edinburgh Courant, December 1864).*

THERE are few more curious things in the eyes of an impartial observer than the kind of way in which such questions as the observance of Sunday are now discussed in Scotland. There is generally a fight about them, in which the combatants are on one side bigots, and on the other buffoons. The Sunday question is not a very difficult one; and there seems no reason why those who think our Sunday too lax, and those who think it too strict, should not advocate their respective causes with the common sense, moderation, and politeness which belong to controversy in civilised countries. There prevails now-a-days, at all events in the larger part of the empire, a very prevalent persuasion that, considered merely from a civil point of view, Sunday is an excellent institution. The tendency of the age is not to work too little, but too much; not to sink into mysticism, by too prolonged contemplation of

supersensual ideas, but to neglect them altogether ; not to overrate the worth of the great Christian tradition and literature, but to forget their existence in the hurry of business and pleasure. A day solemnly set apart for rest and religious offices, keeps these materialising influences of the age in check ; and helps the dullest blockhead to understand the power of those spiritual beliefs which have affected all our literature and our politics, and played so great a part in the history of mankind. Such being the moral and temporal worth of the Sunday, it would seem an obvious principle that its integrity ought to be carefully protected ; that work on it should be reduced to a *minimum* where circumstances make its total abolition impossible ; and that its recreations should be of the purest and most innocent character. No doubt, there will always be conflicting views of the rightful observance of the day. Some will be for making it more austere than the holiest men have thought necessary. Some will be for making it resemble as much as possible the ordinary days of the week. A portion of the public will hold a middle position between the two. But for the life of us, we cannot understand why the question should not be agitated without threats of ruin or damnation on the one hand, and low street ribaldry on the other. It is unaccountable to us why ministers cannot refrain from vulgar scolding, and editors from vulgar jesting, when this particular—and on the whole grave and serious—subject turns up. The fact is characteristic of our Northern civilisation, and it is a permanent one evidently for the present.

Let us take the late meeting against Sunday railway trains, and the *Scotsman's* article on it, in illustration of

these reflections. Sir James Baird does not make his case a bit stronger by threatening the country with "God's wrath," and the loss of its "prosperity" if it does not do what he wishes. This is low ground to take up, from his point of view, for one thing ; and for another, it is trenching on mysteries which have proved to be beyond the reach of much higher intellects. But there are natural restraints on men of his condition which prevent them from going altogether too far, and which are not so potent in the case of speakers like the Reverend James Bell of Haddington, and the Reverend Mr Ireland of Portobello. The former preacher said, that "if religious and beloved Scotland was to be deluged with these abominations, he believed she would soon be reduced to the level of those Continental nations that so systematically desecrated the Sabbath." There is here an odd mixture of provincial and spiritual conceit. Scotland has her own share of religious merit,—though she will do well not to destroy its beauty by bragging of it. But is she to talk so contemptuously of "the level" of other nations, from many of which she has much to learn,—much in cleanliness and sobriety,—much in tolerance and generosity,—much in culture and the application of scientific discovery to the relief of man's estate? All this is greasy cant. And it is dangerous cant. It may provoke people to inquire how France continues to maintain her "level" with her Sunday, and so on ; inquiries which, handled by the Radical demagogue (supposing us again to see a breed of Radical demagogues with brains), might prove very mischievous to Mr Bell and his friends.

Still,—whatever its drawbacks of this kind,—the meeting of Tuesday had a case, and a good case, and one to

which the article in yesterday's *Scotsman* was a perfectly contemptible reply. In fact, that journal hardly attempted a *reply* in the proper sense at all. It dealt chiefly in long-winded jocosity about the Chairman's speech, and avoided any detailed criticism of the general facts brought forward at the meeting. "If even some small proportion of the stories told about the running of goods trains is true," the *Scotsman* says, "there is ground of complaint." Why not inquire? Even if Sir James Baird is wrong in assigning passengers to so many as eight of the ten trains which he tells us pass Millerhill every Sunday, that is only a partial error, not an error in spirit, when the object of the meeting is considered. And, then, we are told that the object of a recent extra train on the North British is to bring people in to church,—a statement of which no proof is offered, except that it arrives in time for them to go there. To reach town when the church bells are ringing is not the same thing as to reach it for the purpose of attending service, though the one fact makes the other possible. But to rob the *Scotsman* of this theory would be to spoil the one joke,—and that an old joke,—for the sake of which the article seems to have been written. Sir James Baird, it appears (though we don't know how the fact came officially before the world), drives into Edinburgh to church in a carriage. Now, says the *Scotsman*, he might come by the train. And in leading up to this,—in beating it out thin,—in dancing round and round it with the clumsy antics of an imperfectly-trained bear bred in the provinces,—at least three mortal fourths of a mortal column are taken up. The poverty of these fellows' wit is astonishing, and would not be credited in London or Paris.



"He drives a private carriage *through the Fourth Commandment and into Edinburgh.*" Why, we remember this little jest some half-a-dozen times in the *Scotsman*, ourselves. And it was stolen, at its first appearance, from the well-known illustration of O'Connell's, about driving a coach and four through an Act of Parliament. Poor as humour, it is abject as reasoning. The reasoning founded on it is that Sir James commits the same kind of sin,—as he considers it,—by being driven to his church in a carriage, as the Railway Company by running the train. Now, even if the train by which he might come were a special Church train, there would still be the difference that the Company ran it for profit,—making the *motive*, that is the very soul of the act, different. But Sir James and his friends deny that it is a Church train,—that to bring people to Church is the reason of its running,—so the *Scotsman* begs the question. In fact, this elaborate piece of ponderous comedy is only another version of the same writer's well-worn pleasantry about the clergyman's Sunday dinner. For some years his reputation rested on the astonishing epigram, that if a clergyman disapproved of regular week-day work being carried into Sunday, he had no right on that day to eat and drink. In the Fife Radical villages this is probably the favourite piece of wit of modern times. People, however, pardon old jokes more readily than old calumnies. Professor Balfour is spoken of in the article before us as "the celebrated Sabbath pedestrian who walks twice the distance for the purpose of sight-seeing." This is, if not a direct falsehood, a suggestion of what is false. It is based on the circumstance that news of a great flood having reached a house in England where Mr Balfour was,

one Sunday, he walked over to the scene, ready to offer any of the assistance which might so easily have been required from a man of science. Educated men will see the difference between this and what the *Scotsman* wishes to be believed instead of it. The basest part of the affair is, that if the Professor were a rival writer who could reply to this parish satirist, and knew how to "lay it on," he might reduce him to silence in a week ; and make his assailant as shy of him as if he were a bit of Latin.

On the whole, then, we think this last specimen of Scottish religion on the one hand, and Scottish "Liberalism" on the other, humiliating to the country. But what does come very clearly out of the affair is, that there is a distinct and undeniable increase of Sunday traffic on the railways. For the reasons given above,—and not for the reasons of Sir James Baird and his friends,—we protest against the innovation. We are not prepared to say that there should be no possibility of railway locomotion on Sundays, because railways have superseded other modes of travelling so much, that in cases of urgency, want of communication by them means want of communication altogether. But when we find goods being carried to and fro, as if law and custom made no distinction between one day and another, it is time to remind Railway Directors that their dividends are not paramount objects of consideration in a civilised society. The twaddle about our "liberties" is only sickening. We do not go for our religion to fanatics, but neither do we go for our freedom to illiterate drolls.

## THE SNOB ABROAD.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, October 1864).

A LETTER has just appeared in the *Times*, suggesting some reflections which unfortunately are only too apt to recur to one again and again at this season, as the years roll by. The writer, an English tourist, dating from Amiens, records a scene which he had recently witnessed in the Cathedral of Boulogne. He found the sacred building full of British excursionists, "walking about with their hats on, and with pipes in their mouths;" and as he innocently adds, he had "some difficulty in persuading" those whom he addressed "of the gross impropriety of their conduct." We dare say he had. Blackguards of the kind are not likely to have been very open to considerations of reason or decency; and ought rather to have been treated as the lowest classes of animals are when found straying into a flower garden. "It is this sort of behaviour," the writer goes on, "that serves to confirm foreign Catholics in their belief that the English, since their severance from Rome, have lost all faith in sacred things, and all respect for those solemn mysteries which are the common inheritance of both branches of the Catholic Church." Of course we cannot be answerable for the delusive impressions of foreigners about British Protestantism. They are, as a general rule, very imperfectly acquainted with the tenets of the Church of England; and Scotland has now such comparatively little separate intercourse with the Continent, that she cannot expect her own

Church to be any better known to them. But we can all understand with what admirable effect a scene like that described above could be handled by the foreign priest for the edification of his flock. How natural it would be to him, and to them, to believe, that with our allegiance to the Papacy, we had cast off all respect for places of worship, and for the most sacred and august names in the Creed. It is not improbable, indeed, that the influence of our lower forms of bigotry goes for something in the formation of such blackguards as those referred to. We have many preachers who talk as if out of Protestantism there was no Christianity, and out of their own sect no real Protestantism. These views the snob readily embraces, and he has a particularly zealous dislike of a Church which insults him by praying in Latin! But, on the whole, we don't attach much importance to such feelings, as far as the behaviour complained of is concerned. The men Mr Bevan saw in the Cathedral of Boulogne, acted as they did from what may be familiarly described as an abstract *caddism*. They would have shown equal indecency in a museum or a theatre, if permitted, but enjoyed peculiar facilities, from the fact that Continental churches lie open to all comers, as places of perpetual and uninterrupted worship of one kind or another. The real significance of the narrative lies in the fearful picture it gives of the class of persons who have begun to travel in our time. It is all very well to say that Boulogne is the first outpost of the Continent which the snob seizes, and that many a London snob never advances beyond it. He does, as a general rule, now-a-days, advance beyond it. The Rue de Rivoli smells of him. The French comic

papers make endless sport of him. He flattens his nose, as far as it is capable of further flattening, in the windows of the goldsmiths' shops in Genoa. His bluchers tread contemptuously over the flagstones carved with the arms of the Knights of St John in the churches of Malta. Nay, he helps to confirm the sacred prophecies of the degradation of Jerusalem by showing himself even in the Holy City. We appeal to all educated men, whether the number of his vulgarest countrymen now met with abroad every autumn is not one of the most serious drawbacks in the holiday of an Englishman? Scotchmen of the same class have even less excuse, for every Englishman knows something of England; but it is not uncommon to find a Scot groping about Paris and Versailles who hardly knows his way from Holborn to Charing Cross, and who has never seen the cool woods of Warwickshire, or the wild roses which swarm in the pleasant lanes of Herts.

The truth is that railways and steamers have altogether done away with the very theory of travel, as it was held by our ancestors. In their eyes, travel was a part of education; was just as much a branch of culture as the study of grammar or philosophy. Bacon's celebrated essay on the subject rests on this principle as its basis; and though few even of the best sort of travellers of the old school ever rigidly adhered to his ideal, still the ideal existed, and had more or less effect on generations of tourists. You were supposed to know something of the history and languages of foreign countries before you visited them. You were expected not merely to look at their picture galleries and palaces, but to attend their courts of law, inspect their industries, observe their modes



of farming, and so forth. But who that has watched the snob of our day in foreign parts ever saw him really learning anything? When is he known to inquire what the tenure of land is, how the poor are maintained, or generally in what ways the new life, in the middle of which he finds himself, differs from his own? He is brutally incurious about all that; and his ignorance is one of the chief causes of his insolence. Every peculiarity of foreign manners is to him a deflection from the standard which he supposes to be constituted by his own; and he naturally comes to think that whatever is characteristic of a strange people is a legitimate butt of his ridicule. Hence the wretched rudeness with which he treats everybody, and by which our nation is unfortunately made hateful or contemptible in the eyes of some of the greatest nations of Europe. Extreme cases, like this Boulogne incident, are hardly to be called common. But still that incident is only an aggravated form of what is a common disease. Remedy, we are afraid, there is none. We cannot put an export duty on snobs, for that is against our favourite freedom of commerce. But, at least, we can try to neutralise the ill effect of their conduct by a rigidly scrupulous attention on our own parts to the duties of international politeness; and we can rigidly avoid showing any countenance to such of our compatriots as may misconduct themselves under our own observation.

## HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, June 10, 1862).

IF it be true, as David Hume says, that every institution rests in the long run on opinion, the death of a philosopher must be considered a much fitter subject for a leader than most of those which newspapers discuss. Mr Buckle, whose death the world learned yesterday, was not a man in whose philosophy we believed, nor do we think that posterity will rank him with the highest class of thinkers. His talent, however, for popular exposition, and the thorough-going earnestness with which he brought his wide reading to bear on the higher problems of the age, justly entitled him to respect, and made him a very influential writer. But his success, while deserved as a matter of literature, was chiefly valuable as a sign of the speculative tendencies of the age. It is not too much to say, that the theory he propounded of history had for its object to destroy all received ideas on the subject. It viewed man's action as being governed by laws like those which regulate the planets or the tides; and explained the growth of nations, and the phenomena of their civilisation, partly by physical circumstances, and partly by the operation of science, studying these and their results, and applying the lessons of the study, practically, in the form of philosophy. On this scheme, providential agency, equally with human free will, disappears from history. The action of individuals becomes insignificant. The moral element

is regarded as mistaken or perverting. The past generally is viewed as dark and barbarous; and government and religion as retarding influences in the course of human affairs. Of course, no single element in all this doctrine was new. The skill of Mr Buckle lay in his power of combining, in support of the doctrine, the results of inquiry in half a dozen branches of knowledge; and in his power of putting his thoughts into fresh, flowing, energetic English. Yet, even these gifts do not alone suffice to account for his popularity. He would never have been so much read if there had not been a largely-diffused dissatisfaction with existing beliefs throughout society. Nor would he have excited so much interest if the British reading public had been more familiar than it is with current European speculation. The moral of his success for those who have the intellectual training or the religious direction of the country in their hands, is, that the training and direction both require improvement. Philosophy can only be opposed by philosophy; and if those whose business it is to maintain orthodoxy in religion and politics were philosophical themselves in handling their subjects, such books as Mr Buckle's would take less hold on the popular mind. It is not mere perverseness of taste, as some veterans suppose, but a healthy intellectual love of discovery, and admiration of intrepidity and erudition, that makes the youth of a country run after works like the "History of Civilisation." And our professed doctors ought not to leave their youth at the mercy of every innovator. They ought to be abreast of the tide of European speculation, and able to calculate its next wave and next tide line. So far from this being the case, the bad effect is generally

produced before the remedy is ready; and we need only instance Mr Buckle's second volume as having been a twelvemonth published without having produced a single worthy vindication of our Scottish history, of which it was a kind of impeachment. How striking a comment this is on certain national deficiencies, we need hardly say. As for those shallow people who imagine that a merely speculative book may be disregarded as harmless, they should ponder the remark of Hume, which we set out with quoting. On the ultimate depth of "opinion," which our institutions rest upon, their stability will depend; and it is easy to fancy how the fate of a piece of legislation might turn on the notions formed by legislators about Scotland, notions which Mr Buckle's book should have helped to form. Indeed, the public opinion of any generation is only a compromise arrived at between the conflicting doctrines of the generations before it.

Some of our emptier Scotch "Liberals" have only one cry in the case of such men as the philosopher whom England has just lost. Let us have "freedom of inquiry," they say,—“the more discussion the better.” This is very obvious and very easy teaching, but it is only half of what the world requires. The world does require free investigation; and as far as Mr Buckle was concerned, he was utterly unchecked, except by the regular literary opposition which all men lay their account with, who have systems to establish, and which, by his treatment of all subjects, he haughtily and defiantly provoked. When a rumour got abroad in London, that some bigots meant to try and keep him out of the Athenæum Club, a rally of men determined to see fair play crushed the conspiracy at once. Philoso-

phical freedom is secured in all the higher regions of thought now, as it ought to be. But philosophical culture for the defence of established doctrine against innovation is *not* secured; and "Liberals" who are also professors, doctors of divinity, etc., would do well to concentrate on that point the attention which is not now needed for the defence of liberty of speech and writing. To be sure, the production of platitudes is an easier and showier task.

Considered as stimulants of intellectual inquiry, and of the higher culture, books like Mr Buckle's must be pronounced very salutary; and all mere denunciation of them, unsustained by learning or argument, only strengthens their effect on the public mind. His doctrine, if accepted, would certainly not only weaken people's respect for every institution existing, but would destroy the race's admiration for some of its greatest men, and tend to sap the popular reverence for virtue, by making virtue appear a quality of no great historical or personal importance. To oppose a doctrine like this, history must be better written—written with a deeper feeling of the moral and poetic elements in it, so that man may be seen acting on circumstances, as well as circumstances acting on man. The theory which makes great men of little account in history is too flattering to democratic jealousy not to have plenty of supporters now-a-days, and therefore requires as effective an opposition as can be brought against it. And Churches will best meet a scheme which treats them as effete anachronisms, by living up to their spiritual tradition in action, while making themselves perfectly acquainted with the point of view of their opponents. One of the most significant symptoms about Mr Buckle's philosophy was



not only its perfect honesty and sincerity, but the gravity and business-like air which belonged to it. There was no levity, no caprice, no apparent love of display, in his heterodoxy, which, therefore, all the more deserved serious and thorough-going refutation.

On the whole, while drawing the proper moral from his success, and apart from the temporary provocations of controversy, it is impossible not to speak regretfully of Mr Buckle's early death. We were at some pains last July, in the *Courant*, to show why we could not accept his theory of Scottish history as a whole; and a retrospective glance at the articles reminds us that we occasionally expressed this with some acerbity. There can be no harm in saying, however, that Mr Buckle, like other bookish and somewhat solitary men, was apt to be contemptuously dogmatic, and to state his views with a disregard of the long-cherished associations of others, which in some degree justified his critics in attempting to retaliate. In not a few quarters, we fear, he was very ill used. But all that is over now. His unfinished work remains, and will remain, a monument of his industry and ingenuity, to be opposed, when opposed, without bitterness, though not, it is to be hoped, without profit to the cause of truth. There is something touching—something that awes the imagination—in the place and circumstances of this famous writer's death. A disciple of the latest and hardest schools of thought of modern money-making Europe, he died amidst the gardens and fountains of the oldest city of the world, the Damascus of Abraham and St Paul; and the last sun he was destined to see went down behind the immemorially sacred heights of Mount Lebanon.

## SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, November 1861).

WE are very glad to welcome the biography of so good and great a Scotsman as Sir Ralph Abercromby; and we are certainly not the less disposed to criticise it indulgently when it comes to us as the posthumous work of his son. Such a book is *professione pietatis excusatus* if it cannot be *laudatus*, as Tacitus (very unnecessarily in his own case) pleads. But we have no right to find fault with Lord Dunfermline for not having shown, in a book which he executed as a duty, the biographical genius which is one of the rarest things in literature. We shall content ourselves, therefore, with a mild protest against the dryness of the work, regretting infinitely that a larger use was not made of Sir Ralph's private letters, and the personal recollections of him by friends, which together might have made his image more life-like and familiar to us. But here our censure ends. If Lord Dunfermline had not the faculty of some biographers, he was still more conspicuously free from the faults of the majority of them. The taste, tone, and temper of his book are perfect. An atmosphere of decorum, moderation, and chastened filial affection pervades it; and there is nothing in the political allusions to wound the most susceptible of Conservatives. In short, if this "Memoir" is dry, it is a wholesome sound dryness like

\* *Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby, K.B., 1793-1801. A Memoir by his Son, James, Lord Dunfermline.*

that of a Christmas log, and not the far commoner dryness which belongs to *dry-rot*.

Sir Ralph Abercromby,—whose name, like Nelson's, is indissolubly associated with Egypt,—was by descent a cadet of the Abercrombys of Birkenbog. His father and grandfather each lived to be senior members of the Scottish Bar, then almost exclusively recruited from their class; and were Presbyterians and Whigs of the higher type. Sir Ralph, whose mother was a Dundas of Manor, was born at the paternal place of Menstrie, in the county of Clackmannan, in October 1734. Though a Whig, his father was *liberal* enough (in the true sense) to send the boy to a Jacobite school at Alloa, from which he went, successively, to Rugby, Edinburgh, and Leipsic. He was thus thoroughly well educated, a fact which told on his after career; and we learn, with high satisfaction, that he loved the Roman literature, and retained his relish for the Wolf's Milk on which he had been suckled, through life. We quote the passage (one of the too few in which Lord Dunfermline has left us any account of his father's private character and habits), that our youthful readers may take its lessons to heart :—

“In the country, his habits were retired and simple; he found active occupation in the management of a small farm; he acquired an interest in the different schemes of agricultural improvement which then engaged the attention of the public; he read the remarkable publications of the day, and he possessed an inexhaustible resource in his own reflections, as he was at all times rather a profound thinker than an extensive reader. His society was limited to a small circle of relations and friends, and to the neighbouring gentry and clergy, with

whom he at all times associated on courteous and friendly terms. In his intercourse with his neighbours he always endeavoured to lead the conversation so as to induce his guests to express their opinions on those subjects on which they were likely to be best informed, and this they were the more readily induced to do from the singular affability and modesty of his own manner. His guests retired not only pleased with the hospitality and kindness with which they had been received, but the skill with which he had elicited whatever information each could contribute, had placed them on such good terms with themselves, that few reflected or were conscious that they had been engaged in conversation with one who was so much their superior in the extent of his views and the vigour of his understanding.

"The impression made by the conduct of Sir Ralph in his retirement attracted the notice of a traveller in Scotland, to whom he was unknown. 'As a country gentleman,' says the writer, 'Sir Ralph was ever attentive to all within the circle of his movement; he stands high in the estimation of his neighbours and dependants, and when his military glory shall have fallen into oblivion, it will be gratefully remembered that he was the friend of the destitute poor, the patron of useful knowledge, and the promoter of education among the meanest of his cottagers; and as a circumstance, it may be mentioned that, in the village of Tullibody, on his paternal estate, a reading school, under his inspection, was established many years back.'

"Gratitude and affection may, perhaps, justify an allusion to another of Sir Ralph's pursuits during his retirement in the country. For a considerable period of time he regularly devoted a portion of each day to the instruction of his son, the writer of this Memoir. Sir Ralph had not kept up the knowledge of Greek which he had acquired at school, but Cicero, Horace, Cæsar, Tacitus, and Livy, were authors with whom he was familiar, whose merits he tasted, and always read with real pleasure. His efforts as a teacher were mainly directed to the perusal and study of these Latin authors, whom he so much

admired, and to the formation of a simple, clear, and nervous style in English composition. The most vivid and enduring impression that survives, is the remembrance of the wise, elevated, and noble principles which he uniformly and earnestly inculcated; and now, at the close of a long life, a comparison of the lessons which he taught, with the results of personal experience, derived from intercourse with public men and the world, renders it impossible not to be filled with increased veneration for the penetration, sagacity, rectitude, and generous principles of the instructor, and with a painful consciousness of the manifold deficiencies of the pupil."

At twenty years of age, young Abercromby returned from Leipsic, strongly averse to pursuing the law, and very anxious to enter the army. His father regretted this, but being a man of sense gave way; and Ralph Abercromby joined the Third Dragoon Guards in March 1756. A grave, calm, high-aspiring youth, he had taken up the soldier's profession, not as what it is to so many, but as an intellectual career fit for the best minds, and demanding the exercise of the soundest moral qualities. And it became to him, what the sister-service became to Collingwood,—a man like him in several respects, though of a nature more genial, and with a vein of humour of which we see no trace in Sir Ralph.

The "Memoir" notices the earlier portion of Sir Ralph's services very briefly. But we learn that he was in Germany during some portion of the Seven Years' War; and, as might be expected, he was deeply impressed through life by what he then heard, perhaps saw, of Frederick the Great. Another portion of this early service was spent in Ireland, but that, too, is all dark for us, except that we know him to have been learning his profession.



All the best years of Abercromby's life were indeed spent in the mere routine of home service, and were a slow preparation for the great work he was to do in advanced age. He avoided serving in the American War, of which he did not approve ; and this gives us an opportunity of showing what his politics were. Let nobody suppose that they were revolutionary in the vulgar sense, or were such as some of our "French sympathisers" then held, and were encouraged in holding by at least a section of the Whigs ; for we all know that a great and important part of the Whig body fell off from the French Revolution when it showed its true colours :—

"Sir Ralph had anxiously watched the progress, and carefully studied the causes and results of the American Revolution ; he admired the conduct and character of General Washington as a noble example of moderation and patriotism, and he rejoiced in the development of the great principles of religious and civil freedom, which he always expected would exercise a powerful and favourable influence in Europe. With such opinions, he could not fail to be warmly interested and strongly excited by the striking events of the French Revolution. From the first he made a just estimate of the importance and magnitude of the crisis that had arisen. His ardent love of liberty was tempered by a calm and sound judgment ; he never was seduced by theories, however plausible ; his views were practical, and he knew that freedom could not be suddenly and safely conceded to people who had been long oppressed, and that they could only be trained to the use and enjoyment of it by experience, and under the influence and control of energetic and wise leaders. He never was for a moment dazzled or misled by the professions of the leaders of the French Revolution, whose conduct he condemned as rash and dangerous in conceding to the people liberties which they were unprepared to understand or

use with discretion. His hopes for the establishment of freedom in France were always damped by the fear that liberty would be abused, and that from aiming at too much they would fail in obtaining those real benefits which were practical, and adapted to the circumstances of their situation, and which might be secured under firmer and wiser guidance. When the French Revolution was discussed in his presence, he gave expression to these sentiments, by remarking that the French people were not sufficiently instructed to submit to the sober guidance of a Washington, *and that they required to be controlled by a firm and energetic hand, such as that of Frederick of Prussia, until they could be gradually trained to the exercise of freedom*; since, if they were not so restrained, the result might be perilous to themselves, might obstruct the progress of freedom, and involve the rest of Europe in serious embarrassments."

Nobody will dispute the excellent sense of these words; while the fact that near seventy years afterwards, the "firm and energetic hand" should still be as much required as ever, somewhat justifies those among our grand-sires who were not so hopeful of the Revolution as Sir Ralph Abercromby.

In February 1793, the National Convention of France declared war. Sir Ralph, now entering his sixtieth year, was appointed a brigadier in the force sent to Flanders under the Duke of York. His fame was still to make; and the proof how excellent his long quiet apprenticeship had been is the way in which he established it during the few years of advanced life left him. For the Flanders campaign proved a failure, in spite of the gallantry shown by our forces on particular occasions; and what first really established Abercromby's character as a commander, was the way in which he conducted the retreat through Holland

in the winter of 1794. It was not "glory" that he won, but a good solid crown of plainer leaf,—the respect due to a trustworthy, intelligent, quietly brave man, capable of making the most and the best of desperate situations. Next year, he went off in command of a force sent to attack the French and Dutch possessions in the West Indies. During the voyage, a storm arose, and for once, Lord Dunfermline (infinitely stingy in this way) treats us to *an anecdote*. "At a moment when the *Glory* was known to be in the most imminent danger, the confidential servant of Sir Ralph rushed into the cabin, where he was with Admiral Christian, and addressing him said, 'We are going to be drowned!' 'Very well,' replied Sir Ralph, '*you go to bed.*'" The reader, we must add, would quite mistake Abercromby's character if he thought this was *fun* in him. It was prompt self-possessed matter-of-fact attention to the situation, which did not admit of terrified flunkies running about spoiling the only chance of safety. Viewed as such, we think it intensely characteristic of the sober intrepidity of the Scot of that fine old school.

Abercromby commanded in the West Indies for a couple of years, '95-'97; and during that period (with an interval in which he visited Europe), he reduced St Lucie, Demerara, Berbice, and Trinidad. His next employment was as head of the forces in Ireland—'97, '98—a highly disagreeable task, which brought him into the worst relations with the advisers of Lord Camden, the Lord-Lieutenant, and which he resigned. The King gave him the command in Scotland, doubtless as a kind of plaster, and feeling that he had met with hard usage; and then—1799—sent him again to Holland, where an attempt was to be made, in

conjunction with Russia, to free the country from the French. "I breakfasted with Sir Ralph," wrote a friend, "the day before he left Edinburgh to take the command of the expedition to Holland in 1799. I found him in great spirits, and what I less expected, Lady Abercromby was perfectly calm and tranquil. On remarking this to Sir Ralph, he replied, 'I have an excellent wife, who, without a murmur, allows me to go where I please.'" This sensible woman (ungallantly passed over in our review hitherto) was a Menzies of Perthshire; but Lord Dunfermline gives us as Spartan an allowance of his father's domestic life, as of his talk, letters, and amusements.

The expedition to Holland gave Abercromby some further opportunities of showing his great military qualities. He planned and executed (in conjunction with the fleet) the chief success achieved—that of the Helder. But after that the course of events was unlucky. The Dutch did not co-operate with the spirit that had been expected. The French were reinforced in a way that had *not* been expected. Whenever our men and their allies, the Russians, had to fight, they fought splendidly. Sir Ralph showed the greatest resource, judgment, patience, both before and after he was placed under the command of the Duke of York. But the British forces got cooped up (it would take a military writer and a long story to explain how), and had to conclude an armistice, giving up 8000 prisoners. Sir Ralph, however, had so clearly done well, that the Ministry offered him a peerage. But this the high tone of Abercromby's mind would not permit him to accept. "He was unwilling that his name should be permanently associated with a service of which

the result had been so humiliating to the country." On all such points his feelings were those of a quietly proud man, and his language in writing of them is tinged with a certain gravity, and even severity, which shows that his strong, steel-like nature had a very fine edge. He would do his duty with extremest accuracy to the minutest detail. He was keenly sensible to the *honours* of success and reputation. But *he* must be the judge *when* he had earned them; and they had no value for him till that time had come. It was coming, but with it was coming the end of all that was mortal in such aspirations; and death was to place a laurel of more precious beauty than the coronet would have had, on the cold brows of the great Scottish soldier.

"On the 22d April 1800, Sir Ralph Abercromby, who was then in Edinburgh, received a summons from Mr Dundas, Secretary of State for the War Department, requiring his immediate presence in London. On the following day, Sir Ralph took leave of his family, and left Scotland never to return."

Such is the simple but not unaffecting language in which Lord Dunfermline opens his account of the last expedition of his illustrious father. We shall wind up with a brief sketch of this—the most striking, the most important, the most illustrious, and the last—scene in our hero's career. But it is impossible to narrate it here in detail; nor has it been our ambition to do more in this article than to give a rapid summary of a life and character which are not, we think, sufficiently familiar to the younger generation of our readers.

Ministers had now determined to strike a blow in the



Mediterranean, and Sir Ralph sailed from Portsmouth for Gibraltar in May. From Gibraltar he proceeded to Minorca ; and was already *en route* from thence to Genoa to join our Austrian allies, when the news of the decisive battle of Marengo induced him to change his course for Leghorn. There, he saw Lord Keith, after which he returned to Minorca, and made a careful inspection of his troops. His instructions now were to attack and occupy Cadiz, for which extensive preparations were made at Gibraltar ; but when it came to selecting a point for landing, the naval men thought the conditions unfavourable, and the scheme was given up. This caused Sir Ralph much disappointment. But the new orders from home pointed out Egypt as the best scene of action ; and Sir Ralph promptly acceded to the plan of endeavouring to drive the French from that country, and so compelling them to a peace. He wanted a peace founded on some striking success of this kind, for it was his fixed belief that the war, *as a war to put down Revolution*, could not be finally successful, and that we ought to wind up our share in it honourably and vigorously, as soon as possible. He went into the Egyptian scheme with the greatest keenness ; and an eye-witness describes him at that time (he was sixty-six years old) as “ten years younger since he left England.”

The chief preparations for the great expedition now resolved on were made at Gibraltar and Malta. But the final rendezvous was in the splendid harbour of Marmorice Bay, near Rhodes, on the coast of Asia Minor, a bay of which the mouth is narrow, but which, inside, is a most noble and extensive anchorage, surrounded by mountains

clothed with woods from top to base. (It was here that the Mediterranean squadron wintered in 1840, after the Syrian War, and we need hardly say that it is not a spot easily to be forgotten). At Marmorice, Sir Ralph worked indefatigably, getting everything into order for the great day of sailing. The sick were sent into an hospital at Rhodes, with its many classical and many feudal associations. Horses and mules were bought. Wood and water were laid in. Maps of Egypt were studied. Every detail of discipline was carried out; and instructions for all kinds of contingencies were drawn up and made familiar to the officers. On the 22d February, the fleet sailed, bearing a force estimated at 16,337 men and 627 horses. The weather was hazy and windy for some days; and by an unlucky mishap the important engineer officers who had gone on to reconnoitre the coast were captured by the enemy. This happened in Aboukir Bay, so it had the effect of teaching the French where to expect the invasion. In that bay, however, the greater part of the fleet anchored on the 2d March; strong north-west winds blowing the while, and beating up the heavy surf on the landing-place. It was the 8th inst. before the landing (all the details of which had been arranged in Marmorice) began. On that morning, at two o'clock, the fiery signal-rocket streamed from Lord Keith's flag-ship, and the first division began to get into the boats, superintended by Captain Cochrane of the navy. The men answered "with hurrahs" to the heavy concentrated fire which met them from the shore. As soon as they reached the sandy, hilly beach, the battle began. "This," observed Sir Ralph, in high good-humour, to General Hope, "is really taking the bull by the horns."

He landed quite in time to direct the troops in this first engagement, which secured the landing, and passed the cold night which followed "under a small hut formed from branches of the date-trees." The soldiers had built this specially for him, a pretty little compliment to a General who was famous for his attention to *their* comfort and health. Strange to say, Lord Dunfermline seems to think it half necessary to apologise for this "trifling incident" (p. 281), though it is just the kind of detail, the want of which is the only fault we have to find with the "Memoir."

On the 12th, the army advanced five miles, fighting its way against tirailleurs and cavalry amongst sand-hills and date-woods. On the 13th a battle followed, in which the French fell back, and the British lost 1100 in killed and wounded.

Our army was now about four miles from Alexandria, with its right resting on the sea, and its left on the Canal and the Lake. Here was fought on the 21st March the great battle in which Sir Ralph Abercromby fell. To attempt a *description* of it would be beyond the object of our review; and with regard to what is its central event for a biographer of Abercromby, we think it best to tell that in Lord Dunfermline's own words. Here is his narrative of the good and gallant Commander's death, which closed with victory a career of labour and honour:—

"It has never been ascertained at what precise time Sir Ralph received the wound which proved to be mortal. Colonel Abercromby states, that his tent being at some distance from that of Sir Ralph, he did not see him when the first alarm of the French attack was given, and did not afterwards meet him

until about break of day, in the rear of the reserve, when the principal attack had been made, and he then gave him orders relative to the movements of the troops. Colonel Abercromby did not afterwards see Sir Ralph until near the close of the action, when he found him in a small work about the centre of the line, where there were some guns firing on the enemy. Colonel Abercromby observed that the clothes of Sir Ralph were cut, and that there were marks of blood upon them. He asked if he was wounded, and he answered, 'Yes, by a spent ball, but it gives me no uneasiness;' but he added that he felt considerable pain in his breast and side from a blow he had received from a French dragoon who rode against him when the cavalry broke in on the right.

"General Ludlow and Colonel Abercromby urged in the strongest manner that his wound should be examined, but he persevered in refusing, assigning as his reason that there were many poor fellows worse wounded than he was, and that the surgeons were more usefully employed in attending to them. Sir Ralph dismounted, and walked about with apparent ease, watching earnestly the manœuvres of the enemy. After an interval of half an hour, he complained of being very faint, and sat down on the ground, with his back to the parapet of the redoubt.

"General Ludlow then sent for one of the surgeons of the Guards, who were nearest at hand, but only a mate could be found. The mate looked at the wound, and found that the ball had entered the thigh, and Sir Ralph was again pressed to leave the field, but he would not do so until the firing had ceased, and the enemy had completely retired. As soon as the firing ceased, Sir Ralph was removed to the tent of Colonel Abercromby, where the wound was again examined by a skilful surgeon of the Guards, who, not finding the ball where he expected, advised that Sir Ralph should be carried on board a ship, to which he at once assented, and he was conveyed on board the *Foudroyant*, Lord Keith's flag-ship. Sir Ralph was

placed on a bier, and an officer who was present took a soldier's blanket, and was adjusting it under his head as a pillow, when Sir Ralph asked, 'What is that you are placing under my head?' The officer (General Sir John Macdonald, late Adjutant-General of the army) replied that it was only a soldier's blanket; on which Sir Ralph said, 'Only a soldier's blanket! a soldier's blanket is of great consequence, and you must send me the name of the soldier to whom it belongs, that it may be returned to him.' This was accordingly done, and the blanket was duly restored, Sir Ralph himself having given directions to that effect."

The little detail of the "soldier's blanket" worthily winds up our story, its touch of homeliness revealing delightfully the characteristic, plain, unromantic heroism of the man. Scotland has all along produced two types of heroism,—the romantic type represented by her Montrose,—the plainer one by such as he from whom we are now to part. They are found sometimes on different sides of her political and ecclesiastical divisions. But as standing each for a half of her national character, they are equally worthy of the admiration of her people; and that Sir Ralph Abercromby may henceforth be better known to his countrymen is, we think, as patriotic a wish as we are certain that it is a most sincere one on our part.



## EDWARD IRVING AND THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

Poor noble Irving's fault at best was such,  
Others believed too little,—he too much:  
For Gift of Tongues 'twas not unwise to seek;  
Oh, would the Spirit grant our clergy Greek!



## DR GUTHRIE.

(*Edinburgh Courant*, May 1864).

THE retiring manifesto of a public leader of any kind is always a document of more than ordinary interest. The last appearance of an actor takes men to the play who care little for it in general; and the last speech of a statesman melts friends and conciliates opponents. Dr Guthrie knows the force of the feeling in human nature on which this effect depends; and he has made his farewell to the congregation of Free St John's in public. It would be ungracious to submit a paper of the kind, addressed by a preacher to his flock, to rigid criticism, and all the more so, because its contents are almost entirely personal matters between preacher and flock. The style is somewhat dubious towards the end of the fourth paragraph. The superfluous observation of the Doctor, that his Master can do without him, will hardly commend itself to pure tastes; nor the sentence in which he brackets himself with King Hezekiah. But the impression made by the whole is favourable. The tone is pious and friendly, even when it is most self-conscious; and the writer shows a full sense of the sacredness of the tie which has united him to those he is addressing.

But the interest, whether of the occasion or the epistle, is, that Dr Guthrie has been much more to the world than a Free Church minister. He has, in a certain way, been not only one of the most popular of preachers, but a typical Scottish preacher to strangers and tourists. Now, though

we sometimes hear preaching talked of as if it stood on a sacred eminence exempt from ordinary laws, there can be no question that it follows the fashions, and reflects the opinions of each age, like ordinary literature. A slight study of such of the sermons of different ages as survive, will soon convince the reader of this truth. Whatever sort of preaching, then, is "in fashion," may be safely taken as throwing light both on the tastes and the ideas of the period which admires it. And Dr Guthrie's friends need hardly be shocked at hearing that his pulpit oratory has been, just as much as the last new novel, the fruit of an age which delights in amusing literature. But for Scott, to name only one popular author, there would have been no Dr Guthrie. All the Doctor's descriptive passages, all his pathetic bits, all his touches of gloom carefully relieved by lively and sunshiny bursts, all that kind of thing generally, the good man has owed to his own cleverness as inspired, to the public taste as created, by the masters of the modern British fiction and the modern British essay. Do we remind him of this, as if it were anything against him? Not we. It is much to his credit that he should have enabled himself by any legitimate means to command the interest of hearers of sermons, in an age which is apt to be impatient under sermons of all kinds. One lesson, however, ought to be derived from the phenomenon. Men who hold what are called Dr Guthrie's "views," are too fond of treating imaginative literature with sour contumely. It may do them good to reflect that it is because such literature is universally diffused, that the "taking" style of a Guthrie is possible, or effective, or acceptable.

The success of the retiring preacher, however, is otherwise instructive, and that in more important relations than those just referred to. It is much that Dr Guthrie should have helped to remove the old impression that Scottish preaching was universally austere, painfully abstract, dryly logical, and all the rest of it. He has done this, we fear, only too successfully, by making young preachers aim at florid illustration to the exclusion of solid reasoning and distinctly defined doctrine of any kind. But he has done more. The necessities of popularity have modified the teaching of his sermons, just as they have formed and coloured their style. If you strolled in on a Sunday to hear the Doctor, and he was not painting a bit of mountain scenery, he was pretty sure to be warning his hearers "not to look with a jaundiced eye at other Churches." Now, this was very nice, and characteristic of the period. Every generation has its pet virtues; and the pet virtues of this age are tolerance and charity. Of course, we all knew that when the Establishment required a kick, Dr Guthrie was as ready to administer it as his neighbours; and we were puzzled occasionally to distinguish between the wine of Dr Guthrie and the vinegar of Dr Candlish, the tipples were so like, though the reputation of the men was so different, since all agreed that Dr Candlish was—

“———veteris non parvus aceti.”

But, still, it was a mighty thing to see, from the tone of Free St John's, that professed bigotry was not considered likely *to pay*. The tourist, accordingly, who had been told that the Scotch were bigots, went away, thinking perhaps that there was little enough *in* the sermon, were it boiled down into pure *thought*, but glad to find his northern

fellow-subjects more reasonable and humane than he had expected. This, again, was a satisfactory fact, and a valuable symptom. The truth is, that the pulpit is governed by the age, more than the age is governed by the pulpit. Dr Guthrie taught one set of people, what a more select set of people had, through books, been teaching him. The current of opinion is too strong for men, whatever their forms or traditions require them to say ; and just as we see the Voluntaries, now-a-days, doing their best to get rid with a good grace of the stern but inconvenient dogmas of their predecessors, so the most popular preacher of the Free Church has, on the whole, found it expedient to be as little of a strict Free Churchman as possible. Any repeated intrusion into his sermons of the old cant would have alienated the most flattering part of his attendance. One satisfactory conclusion would seem to be, that the more popular a preacher is in our time, the less narrow and mischievous he can venture to show himself. He will have to keep the worst part of himself out of sight, and to sing, like the mermaid, with his tail, that is his sectarianism, well under water. But we must also bear in mind, that from this very state of things the liberality of a preacher like Dr Guthrie proves nothing in favour of the liberality of his particular Church. He is liberal, not *qua* Free Churchman, but *qua* popular preacher ; not because it is enforced on him by the tenets which he professes, but because under no other conditions could he master his rhetoric, or command his celebrity. An out-and-out fanatic of the old school would never enter the galleries or studios in which Dr Guthrie learned to paint (according to his degree of faculty) his storms in Highland gorges, or

his stars glittering over a Syrian landscape. The success of such art shows, not that his Church can influence the world from her own point of view, but that, in order to do so, she must learn that world's own ways and accommodate herself to its tendencies. The career of the most successful of Free Churchmen is the one which has done least to prove any special necessity for the existence of a Free Church.



## PROFESSOR WILSON.\*

(*Edinburgh Courant*, November 1862).

THIS book contains interesting matter about some very memorable men, and deserves to be — and will be — widely circulated. It would be flattery to say that, considered as a biographical work of art, it is entitled to take any very high rank. But there are few good Lives of men of letters in the language; and after you have allowed for Johnson's Poets, and Walton, all the rest may be counted on your fingers. Mrs Gordon writes with excellent taste, — with pleasant pious enthusiasm of feeling, — and, *on the whole*, with a becoming regard for those who were connected with her hero in the business and ambitions of life. Where her book is deficient, this we take it

\* *Christopher North: A Memoir of John Wilson, late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.* By his Daughter, Mrs Gordon. Edinburgh.



is due either to restraints, or defects of material, for which she is not responsible. We certainly expected it to tell us more about some of Wilson's famous contemporaries than it does. There is very little trace of Scott in it, considering the nearness of the men,—physical, moral, and political,—to each other. Even Lockhart is chiefly made familiar to us in letters so exceedingly intimate and hasty that it was hardly right to publish them without fuller letters to *complete* the view of their mutual relations. Lamb and Moore never occur, though there is a good story current about Lamb and the Professor's taking a pot of porter,—nay, we do them injustice, *pots the man*,—together, in London; while Moore testifies in his Diary that he dined in company with Wilson, at Edinburgh, on the 6th November 1825. There are few of Wilson's letters preserved, and none of these are striking. He kept no important diary. His talk has perished. There is no record of the course of his studies, or of the free outspoken criticism on the men and events of the day, which he must have kept uttering all his life. Nay, we are not even told whether he adhered to the Presbyterian Church, or became an Episcopalian, which is always an interesting point about a Scotsman. Again, to come to another side of the subject, we should like to have heard why old Mrs Wilson was so fearfully opposed to his courtship of "Margaret;" and it is not easy to make out whether he lost all his patrimony or only a part of it. Now, we don't say that it was in Mrs Gordon's power to make up by any care (could love have done it, love, we are sure, would not have been wanting), for all the *desiderata* here enumerated. But in some such points, we think, she may still

make her work, to which we wish a growing and permanent success, more perfect. A portion of the literary advice at her service seems good; though in the matter of express literary contributions from Professor Wilson's friends the book is ill-furnished to a degree not quite creditable to those gentlemen. Indeed, there is nothing of real value beside Mrs Gordon's own handiwork, and the Letters, etc., in the book, excepting,—and this is a marked exception,—a sketch of a dinner at Wilson's, by Mr Hill Burton, written with all his customary shrewdness and quiet humour, in his customary good English.

This Life, then, in its relation to general literary history, must be looked on as mainly curious for its pictures of the founding of *Blackwood's Magazine*, though the interest of all that period was long ago much forestalled in Lockhart's Scott. But as a domestic biography it stands alone, quiet alone as a record of Wilson, and in some respects alone, in its kind of interest, among the best domestic biographies of men of letters. Most of these Lives are valuable because they *complement*, they supply the other half, of what is supplied by the works of the men whom they celebrate. Thus, we all knew that Charles Lamb was a delightful humourist, moralist, wit: Talfourd showed us that he had a private life, of which intense domestic devotion under trials of appalling calamity was the continued tenor. We all knew that Sydney Smith was a delightful humourist, moralist, wit, also; not of the school of Lamb,—the poetic, imaginative, somewhat solitary school,—but of dinner-tables, reviews, and the world: Lady Holland, his daughter, showed us that Sydney was a hard-working parish priest, and an affectionate cheerful man, witty at

home as well as in the reviews and the world. And, generally, perhaps, the effect of such Memoirs as these is to surprise the world, by revealing a whole side of the memorable man's existence, which only a few discerning observers were inclined to think possible. Now, it is the main peculiarity of Mrs Gordon's book,—and here we have the key to Wilson's whole nature and career,—that it does not complement Wilson's works in this kind of way, but simply illustrates them by showing that his life and works were in wonderful and happy harmony. Wilson's *life* was a page of one of his books ; and in reading the narrative of it, you find that he was just the kind of man you had always fancied him. Life is one thing, Literature another ; and though at bottom, of course, all Literature is an image of Life, still, long ages have so modified man, by art, by learning, by institutions, that there is not much Literature in which the presence of Nature is very vividly felt. When, therefore, a writer like Wilson appears, who, even without transcendent genius,—for a very great genius he was not,—is in thorough communication with Nature ; writing as he acts, and talking as he does both ; a man “all symmetry,” perfectly healthy, there is a charm about him which even a rarer kind of mind may be without. As a description, then, of this fortunate type of man of letters,—by no means a very common type at any time, and least of all just now,—Mrs Gordon's *Life of her Father* must be pronounced to have even a scientific value. And because Wilson was this kind of man, we take a pleasure in his domesticities and recreations, and can put up with the absence of the sort of material already described as deficient, better than in most cases. But Mrs Gordon has also done literature

and the world a service, if only by taking the trouble to bring together abundant evidence that here was another man of real brains who was a most unmistakeably good fellow. There *may* be men of genius, whose minds, like the street conduits, "run wine" on Coronation days and such festivals, but are ordinary gutters of base matter at common times; for Nature is very various, and produces strange creatures now and then. But we always hail with pleasure every new proof that such monsters are only exceptional; and that your broad, brawny, demonstrative Wilsons, not less than your quaint, quiet, deep-eyed Lambs, are true men at heart.

We may safely assume that every reader knows the general outlines of Wilson's history, and that we need not, at this time of day, proceed to tell how he was born at Paisley in 1785, and educated at Glasgow and Oxford; how he bought Elleray; lived in Cumberland for a time; and returned to Scotland, when circumstances made it necessary that he should work for his bread. We shall only notice a few of the leading events of his life, and that in relation to his writings and his times. It is curious to see, and far more easily seen in his case than in most, how exactly his experience can be shown to correspond with his subsequent literary out-come. The fact that in youth he had ample means was one cause of this. An athlete, a lover of nature, a lover of character, he had every opportunity to indulge these tastes. Not particularly studious, he was lucky to get at Oxford the Greek which enabled him to fight his way through Homer like one of Homer's own heroes. A poet in feeling, if not decisively gifted with the poet's practical artistic skill,—(for in that music,

as in the other, you may have the ear without mastering the instruments),—a lovely residence in Cumberland, and the neighbourhood and friendship of Wordsworth,—developed him into as good a poet as his mind allowed him to be. And all these tendencies expanded themselves freely, and without check, upon the invaluable basis of a supreme physical organisation. The general governing condition of his being was Plenty. He had *all* the human and intellectual feelings and instincts in good quantity and good proportion; tears and laughter, capabilities of joy, capabilities of pain, all abundant, and each intensely powerful for the time; so that, big and strong as he was, he was sentimental *when* sentimental, to the verge of the maudlin and lachrymose, and jolly when jolly, till the roar of his laughter seemed loud enough to shake all the established proprieties of the world. It was this enthusiasm, this plentitude of nature, which impressed everybody, and frightened those who had reason for not relishing his ascendancy. We do not wonder that some really worthy people disapproved of such a man's succeeding to the quiet, exquisitely delicate and refined Dr Thomas Brown. It was bringing in a torch to take the place of a lamp.

Mrs Gordon is justly indignant at the treatment which her father met as candidate for the Chair which became vacant by Brown's death in 1820. When the Whigs said that Sir William Hamilton was the more learned philosopher, of course they were right, though what they meant was that he was the better Whig. But what had Sir William's attainments to do with Wilson's private life, or how did it follow that because Sir William knew Aristotle



better than Wilson, therefore Wilson was a "a bad husband and father?" What they really did not like,—the Whigs of that day,—was Wilson's satire; and, indeed, Wilson used to thrash them with as little ceremony as he would have used in thrashing a carter. *His* satire was essentially and characteristically pugilistic, and he and Lockhart were the Pollux and Castor of the Tories of the day,—

"Hunc equis, illum superare pugnīs  
Nobilem——."

Lockhart fought with the javelin, Wilson with the fist; and though Wilson's satire *seems* the more ferocious, it was really much the least cruel of the two. *Apropos* of Lockhart,—a truly brilliant writer, who wrote the best English style of any Scotchman of his time, Sir Walter Scott himself not excepted; who combined far more of Jeffrey's *French* cleverness and edge than Jeffrey ever had, with a vein of poetry and humour, and art-feeling, and a soundness of scholarship, which Jeffrey never possessed at all,—Lockhart, we say, is not properly treated by Mrs Gordon. She seems to say that his London success made him neglectful of his old Edinburgh friends; yet, on her own showing, he treated the Professor with every due friendly reverence to the last, and the general statement itself is not accepted by those Edinburgh men who knew Lockhart in both spheres of action best.

Of Wilson's teaching in the Moral Philosophy Chair, the world has not yet the means of judging, and a good deal of nonsense is talked about it in the interval. Learning regarded, Wilson certainly had as much right to lecture on such a theme as Sydney Smith, who lectured on it without the temptation of a Chair; and more right than

Tom Moore had to discourse on the Fathers (Tom knew more about *the Daughters*) in the *Edinburgh Review*! Moral Philosophy is a double subject. One may analyse the moral elements, metaphysically; and one may enforce moral lessons oratorically, and either duty will be useful, if well performed. From all accounts, Wilson was strongest in the last department, and by discharging its duties with genius and fidelity he must have done a great deal of good. But in only one region of letters was he first-rate, the region of the magazinist. *Blackwood* is his monument, as the *Edinburgh* is Jeffrey's; though Wilson has, *now*, probably fifty readers for Jeffrey's one. To *Blackwood*, Wilson was what Fonblanque was to the *Examiner*; what Captain Stirling for a period was to the *Times*; what Lockhart was to the *Quarterly*; what Rintoul was to the *Spectator*. "Editor," in the booksellers' sense, he never seems to have been, but he was the intellectual spirit and presiding moral power of the whole affair. The important part of a lighthouse is the light.

We agree, again, with Mrs Gordon, in thinking that Wilson's admirers may be well contented to hear him called a magazinist, or essayist, if that title be preferred. He wrote no great book, any more than Addison or Gray; but he poured out from himself, in abundance, the kind of stuff of which great books are made. And here we may recur to what we said before of his oneness of nature, and may add that he wrote just as he walked, or fished, or boxed, or leaped, and continued to do so till the end. He is the most colloquial and rhapsodical of writers, which is one of the reasons of his great hold over the young. In middle life, his desultory papers are found somewhat

wearisome, and we settle at last on the "Noctes" and the "Homer." We esteem the "Noctes" his best work, and agree with Professor Ferrier in thinking the Shepherd the glory of the "Noctes." Professor Ferrier ranks the Shepherd with Socrates and Falstaff; but though the opinion of a man of his fine intellect and solid attainments is always valuable, we hardly believe that he will get even the most enthusiastic Scotchman to go so far with him. We may, however, remark that there is more *dramatic* power in the "Noctes" than a critic quite appreciates till after several examinations; and that it is unfair to rank the book only by its abundance of fun, rhetoric, and rhapsody. The reader, for example, who turns to the Dialogues in which De Quincey figures, after a thoughtful study of De Quincey's Works in the new collected edition,\* will see that the author has most felicitously imitated the tone of his rare and curious mind. Tickler, too, and North are skilfully individualised, and the Shepherd is always pre-eminently himself. Now, few of our readers have perhaps ever considered how uncommon this power of creating the real Dialogue is in modern literature, for it was a branch, we may remark, in which the ancients were conspicuously strong. It is much to have succeeded in a walk, where, among your predecessors who have failed, are found such names as those of Bishop Berkeley and Mr Landor. The "Minute Philosopher" and the "Imaginary Conversations" are truly delightful reading. The reasoning of the first is beautifully lucent, and its spirit at once gay, gentlemanly, and Christian. Mr Landor's Epigrams sting like Attic bees, while there is Attic honey for those

\* Now proceeding so satisfactorily from Messrs Black's house.

who sympathise with him. But the *persons* in Berkeley's and Landor's Dialogues are shadowy, and want human reality, and warmth, and colour. No footsteps are heard on that classic sward, in those dreamlike gardens! Whereas the Shepherd is as thoroughly a character as any character in Plautus or Molière. The fault of the "Noctes," as of all Professor Wilson's writings, is, that he overdoes everything; that his diffuseness sometimes becomes languor; that his declamation is apt to end in noise; and his poetic monologues to taper away at last into wreaths of indistinct smoke. He was too great a man ever to become a mere egotist. But in reading this Life, one understands how his quasi-autocratic position in Edinburgh became injurious to him. He saw far too little of England, especially of London; and we gather from his biographer that he was never on the Continent at all, and rarely in any society where new and different elements of life might have exerted any influence over him. The effect of his example on weak imitators was especially disastrous. The poetic side of his genius produced a Gushing School; and the comic side a Saucy School; both rapidly becoming intensely provincial. The Gushing School man might be known at once, by beginning his paper, "Blue cliffs of Glenhoolan, where be now your rackdriven," etc., etc.; while the Comic School man talked of "the knout," an instrument in *his* hands scarcely fatal to mosquitoes; and cast defiance at "Cockneys," long after Edinburgh had ceased to produce wits who could have stood for half an hour the epigrammatic fire of a man like Douglas Jerrold; and long after the only really great Scottish writer of the age had taken up his abode among the red-bricked houses,

pleasant boulevards, and airy river-walks of Chelsea. But all this the fine old Professor could not help; and his own *good* influence meanwhile had permeated the country far and wide. For he steadily preached a love of Nature, a love of goodness, and a love of Scotland's traditions and institutions. Nor was he narrowly national. No Scotsman of his time did so much to make the great English poets known, read, and honoured in Scotland; and his life-long fidelity to Wordsworth was as beautiful as Jeffrey's early treatment of him was narrow and mean. But detailed criticisms of criticism are not things for which there is room in a newspaper.

We subjoin a couple of extracts,—the first, a sketch of De Quincey, which is turned off with a really pleasant neatness :—

#### DE QUINCEY'S DINNER.

“I remember his coming to Gloucester Place one stormy night. He remained hour after hour, in vain expectation that the waters would assuage and the hurly-burly cease. There was nothing for it but that our visitor should remain all night. The Professor ordered a room to be prepared for him, and they found each other such good company that this accidental detention was prolonged, without further difficulty, for the greater part of *a year*. During this visit, some of his eccentricities did not escape observation. For example, he rarely appeared at the family meals, preferring to dine in his own room at his own hour, not unfrequently turning night into day. His tastes were very simple, though a little troublesome, at least to the servant who prepared his repast. Coffee, boiled rice and milk, and a piece of mutton from the loin, were the materials that invariably formed his diet. The cook, who had an audience with him daily, received her instructions in silent awe, quite



overpowered by his manner; for, had he been addressing a duchess, he could scarcely have spoken with more deference. He would couch his request in such terms as these:—‘Owing to dyspepsia afflicting my system, and the possibility of any additional disarrangement of the stomach taking place, consequences incalculably distressing would arise; so much so indeed as to increase nervous irritation, and prevent me from attending to matters of overwhelming importance, if you do not remember to cut the mutton in a diagonal rather than a longitudinal form.’ The cook—a Scotchwoman—had great reverence for Mr De Quincey as a man of genius; but, after one of these interviews, her patience was pretty well exhausted; and she would say, ‘Weel, I never heard the like o’ that in a’ my days; the bodie has an awfu’ sicht o’ words. If it had been my ain maister that was wanting his dinner, he would ha’ ordered a hale tablefu’ wi’ little mair than a waff o’ his haun, and here’s a’ this claver aboot a bit mutton nae bigger than a prin. Mr De Quinshey would mak’ a gran’ preacher, though I’m thinking a hantle o’ the folk wouldna ken what he was driving at.’”

The second is a letter from our great Carlyle, whom Wilson knew early, and always admired:—

#### WILSON AND CARLYLE.

“A letter from so celebrated a man as Thomas Carlyle naturally awakens interest, to know how he and Professor Wilson regarded each other. The terms of affection expressed in this epistle would lead to a supposition that there had been an intimate intercourse between them. But either want of opportunity or other circumstances prevented the continuance of personal friendship. It seems that these two gifted men never met, at least not more than once again after their first introduction, which took place in the house of Mr John Gordon, at one time a favourite pupil, and ever after a dearly-loved friend of my father:—

“ ‘ CRAIGENPUTTOCK, DUMFRIES,

“ ‘ 19th December 1829.

“ ‘ MY DEAR SIR,—Your kind promise of a Christmas visit has not been forgotten here; and though we are not without misgivings as to its fulfilment, some hope also still lingers; at all events, if we must go unserved, it shall not be for want of wishing and audible asking. Come, then, if you would do us a high *favour*, that warm hearts may welcome in the cold New Year, and the voice of poetry and philosophy, *numeris lege solutis*, may for once be heard in these deserts, where, since Noah's deluge, little but the whirring of heath-cocks and the lowing of oxen has broken the stillness. You shall have a warm fire, and a warm welcome; and we will talk in all dialects, concerning all things; climb to hill tops, and see certain of the kingdoms of this world, and at night gather round a clear hearth, and forget that winter and the devil are so busy in our planet. There are seasons when one seems as if emancipated from the ‘prison called life,’ as if its bolts were broken, and the Russian ice-palace were changed into an open sunny *Tempe*, and man might love his brother without fraud or fear! A few such hours are scattered over our existence, otherwise it were too hard, and would make us too hard.

“ ‘ But now descending to prose arrangements, or capabilities of arrangement, let me remind you how easy it is to be conveyed hither. There is a mail-coach nightly to Dumfries, and two stage-coaches every alternate day to Thornhill; from each of which places we are but fifteen miles distant, with a fair road, and plenty of vehicles from both. Could we have warning, we would send you down two horses; of wheel carriages (except carts and barrows) we are still unhappily destitute. Nay, in any case, the distance, for a stout Scottish man, is but a morning walk, and this is the loveliest December weather I can recollect of seeing. But we are at the Dumfries Post-office every Wednesday and Saturday, and should rejoice to have the

quadrupeds waiting for you either there or at Thornhill on any specified day. To Gordon, I purpose writing on Wednesday; but any way I know he will follow you, as Hesperus does the sun.

“ ‘I have not seen one *Blackwood*, or even an Edinburgh newspaper, since I returned hither; so what you are doing in that unparalleled city is altogether a mystery to me. Scarcely have tidings of the *Scotsman-Mercury* duel reached me, and how the worthies failed to shoot each other, and the one has lost his editorship, and the other still continues to edit. Sir William Hamilton’s paper on Cousin’s ‘Metaphysics’ I read last night; but, like Hogg’s Fife warlock, ‘my head whirled roun’, and ane thing I couldna mind.’ *O curas hominum!* I have some thoughts of beginning to *prophecy* next year, if I prosper; that seems the best style, could one strike into it rightly.

“ ‘Now, tell me if you will come, or if you absolutely refuse. At all events, remember me as long as you can in goodwill and affection, as I will ever remember you. My wife sends you her kindest regards, and still hopes against hope that she shall wear her Goethe brooch this Christmas—a thing only done when there is a man of genius in the company.

“ ‘I must break off, for there is an Oxonian gigman coming to visit me in an hour, and I have many things to do. I heard him say the other night that in literary Scotland there was not one such other man as ——!—a thing in which, if —— would do himself any justice, I cordially agree.—Believe me always, my dear Sir, yours with affectionate esteem,

“ ‘THOMAS CARLYLE.’ ”

After Carlyle, the less one says the better; and we conclude by wishing every success to this loyal and tender Memorial of our large-brained and large-hearted countryman.

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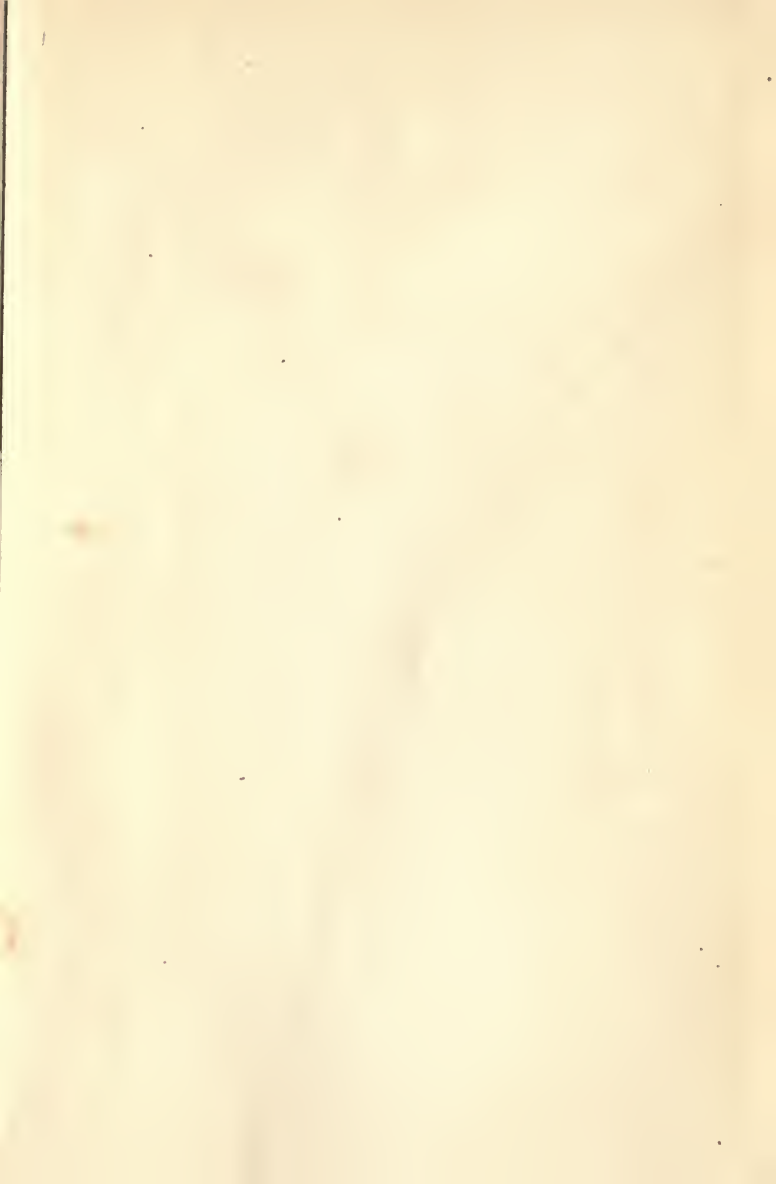
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